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A MODERN ULYSSES.

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BEING

THE LIFE, LOVES, ADVENTURES, AND STRANGE EXPERIENCES OF HORACE DURAND.

BY

JOSEPH HATTON,

AUTHOR OF "THREE RECRUITS," "TO DAY IN AMERICA," "CLYTIE," "THE QUEEN OF BOHEMIA," ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
CHAPMAN & HALL, LIMITED, 11, HENRIETTA ST.
COVENT GARDEN.

1883.

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WESTMINSTER:
NICHOLS AND SONS, PRINTERS,
25, PARLIAMENT STREET.

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A MODERN ULYSSES.

VOL. II.

BOOK I.

Having made known the strength of the shield that kept his heart protected against the loving eyes of Woman, Kina Balua went forth by land and water. As the seasons sped, he came unto the gardens of Indra Kila, where dwelt the Princess Moorabatangan. When she looked upon him from out her piercing eyes, down fell his shield, and all his heart was conquered. Love is a tyranny and youth a slave; but the wise man hath an antidote for the sumpitam of the Passionate God, and he is not bound with a scarf, nor with a braid of hair; yet is Love a blissful dream; and, so it had no awakening, a gift more to be desired than precious stones and the gold of Ophir.—MALAYAN MS.

CHAPTER I.

THE CHIMES OF ANTWERP.

It is five years since Constance Gardner, otherwise Judith Travers, disappeared from the Italian villa, discounting my fondest hopes; and, I must say so even at the risk of appearing flippant, spoiling my simile of Calypso's island. Five eventful years have gone into the limbo of the past up to the date of the period of this present chapter; and the lady of the Villa Verona was not wrong in counting, for my sake, upon the healing for bruised hearts which she declared Time carried under his wing.

Do not imagine for a moment that the Italian dream is altogether finished. Do not fancy me outside its glamour, uninfluenced by

its romance, forgetful of the music of that one sweet voice, the fascination of my first love, and the terrible blow which Father Gabriello's announcement of the lady's flight struck me. I do not forget; I do not desire to do so; and I never shall; but my pains are no longer acute. Moreover such regrets as are still left afflict me intermittently. They come and go. Sometimes the intervals between them are wide apart, occupied by other affairs, filled with sunshine and with shadow, the latter prevailing most.

To-day putting my heart into this chapter, and trying to live the events to be related therein over again, I feel as if Fate had revenged itself upon me for taking liberties with the name of Ulysses. Little did that Anglo-French romancist, playing the 'cello and telling me stories, as shown in the first chapter of this history, imagine that I should live to have some adventures almost as strange and as trying as those of the great Ulysses, whom he almost worshipped. If the career of Laudnum Nanny's granddaughter had been

forecast from the Scarsdale incident of her disappearance, with my meeting her again under the sunny skies of Italy, it would have seemed just as wild a prediction as the idea that one day my good kind Uncle Grantley would turn me out of his heart and home.

Have you ever sat in the sun and listened to the bells in the tower of Notre Dame trying to make merry with the music of *Dinorah ?*

The chimes are out of tune; yet without the harshness of discord. It always seems to me as if there were tintinnabulary tears in their tremulous voices. Let no one ever dream of tuning these sorrowful bells. They have reminiscences of a day and night of riot and rape and massacre. The echoes of these sad memories slumber in the belfry-tower. The chimes awaken them to mingle their solemn whispers with the music.

It is the shadow-dance in *Dinorah* which the melody recalls. For me it conjures up many phantoms, far more real than those

of the mimic stage at Her Majesty's or Drury Lane, at Paris, or behind the footlights at La Scala.

I have listened to them, through the music of a harp, with which a grey-headed sister of the House of Mary accompanies the vesper hymns of the little sisters, singing in their humble chapel, outside the hum and stir of the Belgian city. It needed a special dispensation of the Pope to endow the monastery and endorse the sacred vows of Sœur Constance; but upon the report of Father Gabriello, her money and her piety combined, secured recognition of Holy Church for Constance Gardner, and wiped out for ever the sins of Judith Travers. It was many a weary month after our last parting before I breathed again the air that she breathed; and with what strange and sad events between you shall learn in due course.

Should you not yet have counted the Belgian city among your experiences of travel you will nevertheless find, in these

incidents that have to be related, a value of their own apart from Antwerp's tender chimes and Motley's historic romance. But if you have sat in the sun, and given your imagination over to the fascination of the pathetic jangle of those famous bells, you will the better sympathise with the influence they exercise upon me. At this moment I feel as if they had carolled and chimed throughout my whole life. When I was a boy, with no personal knowledge of the home of Rubens, the author of "The Rise and Fall of the Dutch Republic" had held me in the spell of his dramatic story, his narrative of the flaming desolation in Grande Place, "while over the heads of the struggling throng suspended in mid-air above the din and smoke of the conflict there sounded every half-quarter of every hour, as if in gentle mockery, from the belfry of the cathedral the tender and melodious chimes."

It is possible that certain reminiscences of my own may lend to my impressions of the red days of the Netherlands an added pathos.

There is no egotism in this thought. Places, and things, and the history thereof, get mixed up with events that are only personally interesting to ourselves. Love and folly and adventures of mind and body will, without vanity, unconsciously annex, in their sensations of joy and sorrow, the material and natural surroundings that are associated with them, making backgrounds for other dramatic stories.

Antwerp is one of my landmarks in a life's career; and just now it is, not only in connection with my own affairs, but with those of certain other people who have a share in this narrative, that the muse of history inspires the present mention of the city of Rubens and the famous *carillon*.

I am transcribing these very lines at Antwerp, from the rough notes of an ill-kept diary (posted up from memory during a recent voyage). The consciousness that in doing so I am considering the arrangement of my sentences is indicative of the state of my feelings in regard to the dream of my

youth. But there is a long panorama of dramatic scenery to look back upon between that past time and this; and trying to contemplate it, as if I were an ordinary spectator, and not master of the ceremonies, I find it a strange thing to see myself bending over a white hand at a convent grating, a brother who salutes a sister, a human remnant, as it were, of that passionate boy who thought his heart was stricken in twain when the priest at the Villa Verona told him the object of his devotion had fled; that Calypso had left Ulysses, not Ulysses Calypso; and when I, that impulsive youth, carried to the little Italian hostel an epistolary link between Constance and Judith, between Scarsdale and Baveno. But it has taken a long time to enable me to reflect upon these events with sufficient calmness to write of them as it is my duty to do, having undertaken to be the chronicler of my own life, and the historian of the adventures of certain other persons connected therewith.

It is, I repeat, five years since the ro-

mance of Calypso's island; five eventful years, during which time my mother's foreboding that I might "come to a bad end" has had more or less encouragement. I am "disowned," "cut off with a shilling," by the generous uncle who did not know "the viper he was warming in his bosom," to quote Mr. Jonas Welby, M.P.. who has talked me over, I am told, at Warrington Manor. He and my mother have been on a friendly visit to the dear Worcestershire valley from which I am banished. My uncle refuses to tell anyone why he discarded me. "I am a confounded ungrateful dog, damme!" That is all he says about me. Squire Dunstan, I believe, knew why I degenerated into a mere waif of the great world. His daughter does not. She had heard my name mixed up with some alleged scandal connected with "an affair with an actress at Baveno." Susan Dobbs has "not patience enough to speak of me." I am to her the same "fool" that I was long ago. All this comes to me from Colonel Ernstone. Between him and me

there is a bond of friendship that is personal and sentimental, cemented too by what I may call our mutual love stories. Let me clear this up, while you rest for a moment on the fact of my downfall, my loneliness, and my disgrace.

The time came when Colonel Ernstone did tell Sir Christopher Hallam all that he told my uncle, and all that he told me by the lake of Maggiore. Sir Christopher did just what I said he would, just what any other manly fellow would have done; but the marriage bells which awoke joyous echoes in the happy hearts of the two young people had for Tom and the present writer some gloomy reminiscences, not the least significant of them, for my old friend, the ballad which Helen Dunstan had sung in the days before Baveno. "It rings in my heart for aye!" The bells seemed to whisper between the shooting and the pealing, "Oh, the dance and the merry tune! happy sound of a bygone day!" But Thérèse knew nothing of the song's peculiar influence.

The happy bridegroom knew the story, but the familiar ballad had for him no key unlocking its pathetic depths. He only heard the merry bells. She only saw his glad eyes. The great company of friends, who thought they knew so much, but knew so little, saw in the grave father giving away his pretty child Colonel Tom Ernstone, the hard, cynical Indian warrior. "The meaning of song goes deep," says Carlyle. I never hear "The Clang of the Wooden Shoon" that I do not see the pictures Tom Ernstone saw in the fire. How it touched his heart let this brief story witness. He and I have sat by the old wooden pier, since he heard those marriage bells. In the churchyard of the Normandy village there is a marble tomb. "Julie Ernstone" is engraven upon the slab. "For she *was* in truth and honour my wife," said Tom; "mine before God and man, and shall be in the world to come!" "Amen, old friend, to that!" I said. The villagers stood and wondered at us as we rambled about the ancient place.

And just as that glint of light shot into the gloom of the story in the old days, so now does a happy Yorkshire home rise up among Tom Ernstone's reflections to lift the ballad-music out of its minor key, and give to the pain of it the gentle sadness of a buried sorrow.

I might have been at the wedding, but my dear old uncle made it a condition that if I was invited he would refuse to be present. Since then, however, I have shot grouse on the Hallam moors, and dandled Lady Hallam's children on my knee. All my friends did not discard me because uncle Grantley shut me out of his heart and home. The reader will, I feel sure, have guessed at the trouble which separated Starchy Dick and his reckless nephew. It was Helen Dunstan. He had spoken to Squire Dunstan about the match. They had indeed settled it between them. While I was abroad with Tom Ernstone they had talked of nothing else. Helen had not exactly been taken into their confidence, nor had she been exactly left out of it. She had

been addressed upon the subject by inuendo. No direct attack had been made upon her, but Dick Grantley had hinted to his guests that The Cedars and The Manor would put their horses' heads together one of these days. The rich old schemer, Squire Dunstan, had not said "Yes," nor had he said "No," when very intimate friends had asked if the report in one of the London Society papers of "the engagement of a certain Worcestershire heiress with a gentleman who is no less clever with his pen than as a sportsman, and whose knowledge of the world at home and abroad has earned for him the soubriquet of the young Ulysses," referred to any of the well-known families about Breedon. Imagine, therefore, the indignation of honest Dick Grantley, when returning from "the grand tour" (which had cost my worthy uncle not less than five hundred pounds), his nephew tells him that he is not free to propose to Miss Dunstan.

"Not free to propose to Miss Dunstan!" he exclaimed.

I can see the poor dear old gentleman now, and am sorry for him, sorry for us both.

"No, sir!" I answered.

"Horace, my boy, you have not been drinking, eh?" he asked.

"I am perfectly sober, uncle, and it grieves me very much to oppose your wishes," I answered.

"Oppose my wishes!" he exclaimed; "why you don't mean to tell me that you mean to break this poor girl's heart, ruin your own prospects, and make a confounded fool of me? Damme, the idea is too hideous!

"I was not aware that Miss Dunstan had honoured me so far as to give me the influence upon her affections which you imply," I said.

"Influence on her affections!" he exclaimed, "what confounded stuff are you talking, sir?"

"Don't lose your temper, uncle; be patient with me."

"Lose my temper! Damme, I am not

losing my temper; don't try and cloak your ingratitude under the idea that I am losing my temper!"

"I am not ungrateful," I said.

"You are, sir! You are cursedly ungrateful, and what is worse, sir, you are a fool. But you shall not make a fool of me, sir!"

"That would be impossible," I said; and I really did not intend the dear old man to construe this remark into a sneer.

"O, I am a fool already, am I? Thank you, sir. I begin to think I am."

"I did not say so, nor do I think so; heaven forbid!" I answered.

"You did not say so, and you did not think so, and heaven forbid," rejoined my uncle, mocking me; "what the deuce has come over you? Are you bewitched, or what is the matter with you?"

"Colonel Ernstone will explain," I said, hoping to create a diversion through the name of our mutual friend.

"I want no explanation from Colonel

Ernstone," he said, "my business is with you. Let me tell you, sir, before I ask you a plain honest question, that much as I love you,—and begad I do love you, you confounded idiot you!—let me tell you, sir, that if you do not at once see Miss Dunstan and renew, with a view to marriage, that intercourse which was begun so flourishingly before you left England——"

"What intercourse?" I asked, interrupting him; "before you say anything you may regret, let us fully understand each other."

"What intercourse!" he shouted; "the fool will drive me mad——"

"Calm yourself, my dear uncle," I said, which only increased his excitement.

"I feel exasperated enough to calm *you* with a cudgel," he answered, trembling with passion, "has it not been the talk of the neighbourhood, your philandering with my friend and neighbour's daughter? Did you not lay aside your gun on the 'first' to walk in the

fields with her? Did not Miss Dobbs purposely leave you alone that you might say what everybody had been expecting you to say for weeks? Had not Miss Dunstan herself condescended to encourage you? The finest girl in the county, a sight too good for you, and the heiress to a million sterling! And now you come to me and say you are not free to accept the blessings which Fortune and a too loving uncle offer you? Curse me, sir, but let me tell you if you disappoint her hopes, and mine, and baulk Squire Dunstan's splendid intentions for you, then you are no longer my nephew, nor my friend; I disown you!"

I was too fresh from Baveno to receive this declaration in a conciliatory spirit; my wounds were too green, my sensibilities too tender, my judgment too raw. I seemed to welcome the opportunity of martyrdom; fortune to my inexperienced mind had slipped from under my feet when Father Gabriello announced to me the flight of Judith Travers; and I cared no more about kicking

what remained out of my path than if I were spurning a cur that had bitten me.

"You want my answer?" I said, straightening my back and hardening my heart.

"Yes, sir."

"Then all I have to say is that much as I am beholden to you, deeply sensible as I am of all your kindness, I can only repeat that I am not free to offer my hand to Miss Dunstan."

I do not know why I used that phrase, "I am not free"; but it appeared to me at the time to especially suit the occasion. To-day I should have been more conciliatory, perhaps more diplomatic; but at that time, though I did not wish to offend my uncle and could see that the phrase irritated him very much, I used it again and again, and I cannot now resist a grim sort of smile when I remember the bitter repartee which capped it.

"Not free to offer your hand to Miss Dunstan, you jackanapes! Then hark you,

Mr. Horace Durand, you are free to quit my house, and you are not free ever to return to it again!"

For more than five years I had not seen the dear old gentleman since he uttered these words, which I now recall as the cue to the chief events of the period during which I was absent from England. My uncle's faithful Scotch servant almost wept over me when he found that I was just as resolute to be gone as my uncle was to have me go. I went without a shilling. Sandy Macfarlane slipped into my coat pocket a purse, which I knew that my uncle had given him to put there. I pretended to take it, but I left it on the table in the library; and I took nothing but what I stood upright in, not even a change of linen. It was bleak autumn weather and twilight. The reeds and grasses on Avon's bank were shivering just as they seem to be shivering in the great English painter's "Chill October." I set my teeth and walked on and on all night.

In the morning I was weary and hungry, and I think I discussed with myself Mr. Mallock's question, "Is life worth living?"

Towards noon, while standing on the quay of the Severn river at Gloucester, a seafaring man spoke to me and offered me a job, "if you aint too much of a gent," he said, on his steam-barge bound for Bristol. I jumped at his proposal, which I afterwards found was made more out of compassion at my forlorn looks than from a serious need of labour. At Bristol I discovered that seafaring work suited my new mood, and through the kindness of my Gloucester friend I shipped as a common sailor upon the barque *Phoebe*, a vessel belonging to a line of sailing-ships and steamers. Before leaving Bristol I wrote to Constance, care of Father Gabriello, and I dispatched a short epistle to Colonel Ernstone. How I upbraided myself for not remembering in Judith Travers the girl who had first accosted me when fishing near the mill at Scarsdale I need hardly say. The

reader can imagine all this for himself. I told Ernstone the whole story of my trouble with Uncle Grantley. He knew the other part of it. I begged him so far as my future was concerned to let Time and I have it out together. As to my policy of action, my motives, my intentions, I had none; I was drifting. It was quite accidental that I drifted into a ship; but it was my misfortune that I drifted into a ship that was destined to come to a grievous end.

CHAPTER II.

CIRCE.

When looking back on perils past, it sometimes happens that our most serious hardships appear the lightest. Writing these present chapters within sound of the music of Antwerp, it seems to me that those of my experiences that were hardest to bear, and which still make claims upon my patience, belong chiefly to my boyish days at Scarsdale, and my last hours in the Breedon country. Mr. Jonas Welby's treatment of me at the death of my father; the closed Villa Verona, with my second farewell of Constance Gardner; my uncle's disinheritance of me; the misfortunes of George

Harmer, and the sorrows of a certain merchant of Manilla (yet to be narrated), these incidents stand out in my memory, clothed in crape and wetted with tears. They are as sharp and clear as the leading motives of a picture upon which other scenes are toned down that the leading ideas may first strike attention; yet when we look into the surroundings and the accessories we find suggestions of incident or colour, lacking which the central objects would be without force or significance.

My departure from the pleasant pastures of Worcestershire, on that sad autumn night, was the commencement of adventures that strangely justified the unintentional forecasts of both friends and enemies when they dubbed me "Ulysses." You have already seen me beginning them in a sufficiently prosaic way, first on a Gloucester barge, secondly taking service as an ordinary seaman in a mercantile vessel—the barque *Phoebe*, of Bristol. When the world, so far as our knowledge of it goes, was very young, the Cabots sailed

thence into unknown waters, and landed upon virgin shores. Though they viewed new worlds with sensations very different possibly to those which moved me, they do not appear to have experienced more exciting adventures than those which I went through in connection with the last voyage the *Phoebe* ever made. The troubles of the early English navigators were chiefly those of wreck, climate, and food—the disasters afflicting small vessels in great seas. It was the settlers who had to face the savage, and cement their holdings with blood.

We had taken a cargo from Bristol to London, and another from London to Rotterdam, where we were delayed for repairs prior to making a trip to Java. I had made rapid progress in my work as a sailor-man. The rough experience of the fo'csle did not spoil my temper, and my educational accomplishments proved useful to the skipper, who, in consideration thereof, and out of friendship for the Gloucester barge-owner, allowed me many privileges. He advanced me money

on account of wages, with which I bought me a ship's chest and outfit, packing away the clothes in which I had left home. I shall have to refer by-and-by to my nautical experiences, and more particularly to the treatment I received at the hands of my shipmates; but in the meantime I would like to mention here the day when first I heard the chimes of Antwerp.

As I said before, the *Phoebe* was delayed at Rotterdam for repairs, and the captain gave me a week's leave, partly for my own pleasure, partly that I might make some special purchases, for him and his wife, at Brussels. They had only been married a few months, and she had voyaged with him from London to Rotterdam, and was also to go out with us to Java, where we had to take up a miscellaneous cargo for Sydney. It was a little question of jewellery that was to take me to Brussels. I laid aside my sailor's rig, put on the clothes in which I left my uncle's house, and made the journey to Brussels *viâ* Antwerp. I was

already acquainted with Brussels. Antwerp was new to me. I spent two days in making its acquantance, verifying the red footsteps of "the Spanish terror," and at night I wrote a long letter to Colonel Ernstone, to be posted when the *Phoebe* sailed, and another to Constance Gardner, which I directed to the care of Father Gabriello.

The next morning was a lovely example of spring weather. It was the merry month of May. I had entered upon my first experience of the liquid fascination of *maitrank*. I was sipping a second glass of the delicious decoction, and smoking a cigarette, at a favourite hotel window in the Place Verte, when I became conscious that some person was watching me. I turned my head to meet the inquiring eyes of a young man about my own age.

"I thought I could not be mistaken," he said, leaving the side of a lady, who appeared to be engaged in the study of a continental time-table.

I bowed and waited to learn why he thought he could not be mistaken.

"You don't remember me," he said. "We met a few years ago at Warrington Manor; I painted the drawing-room ceiling there."

"Yes, of course," I said, my mind going back to one of the happiest periods of my life.

"I was permitted to join the shooting party on the first of September. You wrote a sketch of it in the new magazine."

"Yes, yes," I said, "you are Mr. Harmer—how do you do? I am very glad to meet you again."

"Thank you, I am very well," he said, extending his hand, which I shook cordially.

"You have shaved since we last met," I said, as a palliation for any injury he might have felt at my non-recognition of him.

"Ah, yes," he said, "no wonder you did not know me. I have also married since then. Will you permit me to present you to my wife?"

A showy and attractive woman was contemplating our mutual greetings. She was a person once seen you would not be likely to forget. The sequel to this chapter will, I trust, reward you for keeping her in mind. Looking about thirty years of age, she appeared to be several years older than her husband. Her face was ascetically colourless; her eyes, a bluish grey, were very penetrating; her features generally might be called classic. She had the low forehead and straight nose of Greek sculpture, but added thereto was a strongly-marked chin. There was a want of steadfastness in the eyes — they wandered, and seemed to search and watch, as if they guarded or sought a secret.

Carefully considered by accepted canons, Mrs. George Harmer would be pronounced beautiful, and so I suppose she was; but she affected me somewhat as la Grande Place does, with its awful but fascinating history, which a local artist has so nearly succeeded in portraying or at least suggesting, on the canvas

that, first among all the pictures, meets your eye on entering the museum of paintings in the Rue Jerusalem. I did not like her, yet she filled my mind at the moment with a certain curiosity.

Analysing the impression Mrs. Harmer made upon me, it was that of a person to be feared, yet admired, to be charmed with, not to trust, a woman with a strange past and a stormy future.

She laid a cold hand in mine. I pressed it. She smiled. It was the smile of the courtesan rather than that of the wife. I cannot exactly explain what I mean; men will understand me. Good women may guess at it; bad ones will not, otherwise they would command the expression of "the tell-tale mouth" better than they do.

In less than five minutes I could see that Harmer's love for this woman was an all-absorbing passion. He was hers body and soul. Watching him I seemed to see myself at the Villa Verona, only that my love was a Diana, a Penelope, a Darthula, a Clytie

compared with his, who I at first compared to Circe and later to Clytemnestra.

"We are on our wedding tour," said the young fellow, as I placed a chair for madame.

"I congratulate you," I said, turning to him, "and you, madame," I said, addressing her.

"Thank you," she replied, with the same smile as before.

"Julia thinks Antwerp dull," said Harmer, "so we are going on to Brussels and Paris, and then ho for London! and work once more, to replenish the family purse."

"Where have you been, besides to Antwerp?" I asked.

"To the Hague, to Amsterdam, and to Hoorn," he answered.

"Ah, well, Mr. Harmer," I said, "they are very quiet places, I believe; your wife should find even Antwerp lively after Hoorn."

"Yes, I do," she said; "but I like Brighton better, or even Margate."

"Yes, for gaiety, perhaps," I said, feel-

ing that it was necessary to say something, and that the something should be agreeable to her.

"I studied here and at the Hague," said Harmer. "I expect it was rather selfish on my part to bring Julia here. I am only a decorative painter, as you know; and I have a commission in hand which almost necessitated a visit to the Hague. But we are off to Brussels this afternoon."

"Then we shall meet again," I said. "I go to Brussels to-night or in the morning."

Mrs. Harmer smiled and looked at me in a manner evidently intended to be sympathetic and pleasant.

"Where do you stay?" she asked.

"At the Belle Vue, near the park," I said, recalling the time I had stayed there with Ernstone, and feeling a passing misery at the change which had since taken place in my fortune.

"Is it a nice park?" she asked.

"Yes, very."

"Does the band play there?"

"I believe there are concerts in the park *al fresco*."

"Shall you attend them?"

"I shall look in and smoke a cigar," I said, "and take what I may call a general parting glance at well-dressed and musical Europe."

"Are you going on a long journey, then?"

"I am going to the East," I said.

"Oh, indeed! what part?"

"Singapore, China, Java," I said.

"How delightful!" she answered. "Then you must really let us see you again. You are sure to find us in the park at the concerts, is he not, George?"

"Oh yes, I hope so indeed," said Harmer; "if he does not, I will take the opportunity of looking him up, if I may, at the hotel."

"By all means," I said.

"Is that *maitrank* which you are drinking?" asked madame.

"Yes," I said; "may I call the waiter and order some for you, Mrs. Harmer?"

"Thank you," she said, "I am thirsty, and I think *maitrank* is the only really nice drink these foreigners can give one; it is nearly as good as champagne-cup.

Harmer was evidently delighted that she condescended to like anything; and the frank, unconstrained manner which she now assumed began to break down the unhappy impression she made upon me. We sat together, all three of us, and talked pleasantly for more than two hours. I related to her, as well as I could remember it, the story of the Spanish Fury, and how the innocent chimes accompanied the sanguinary business of sword and flame. She was entertained, and I had not felt so contented or happy since my night's journey on foot from Breedon to Gloucester. Harmer had only talked pictures to her, and her fancy was stirred by incident. In her conversation she gave evidence of a far higher intellectuality and education than I had credited her with. She was, however, most moved at my second-hand descriptions from Motley of the riches

of Antwerp before the sack—the jewels and dresses of the women, the precious stuffs and gold plate, the diamonds and pearls, and the money.

When we parted a little later in the day Mrs. Harmer waved a white hand with flashing gems upon its fingers, and as I closed the carriage door upon the happy pair on their way to the railway station, *en route* for Brussels, I thought I ought to revise my first impressions of her.

"It is a mischievous proverb," I said to myself, "that supports the correctness of first impressions. Now that I come to think of it I believe Lavater himself cautions his students not to form hasty conclusions in judging of character."

I upbraided myself for doing the woman a wrong in my hasty estimate of her. Analysing those first impressions I found that there was no redeeming light in my bad opinion of George Harmer's wife. The most abandoned and cruel of her sex could have fared no worse in the picture I drew of

her within the first ten minutes of our acquaintance.

In an after-dinner siesta that evening I made my quick impressions do penance to my cooler judgment, and came to the conclusion that Mrs. Harmer was a very agreeable woman, with an irreproachable figure and a pair of bewitching eyes. Indeed before the Place Vèrte had cleared away its flower-baskets (it was market-day) I had begun to wish for the time to come when I should see Mr. and Mrs. Harmer again; and the next morning before I started for Brussels I bought a new pair of lavender kid gloves and a handsome light neck-tie to match. My hands had broadened since I left Worcestershire. They were rough and coarse too, and I saw Mrs. Harmer look at them.

If Judge Miller could have seen me and heard these confessions he would have smiled and said he knew it: meaning that I was already forgetting the lady and the villa. He would have been wrong. The truth is that for more than eight months I had talked

to no more refined persons than the captain and crew of *The Phoebe* and the captain's wife (a buxom girl who had been a barmaid at a tavern which the captain patronised at Bristol), and the Harmers were a refreshing change. Moreover the husband carried me back to that happy "Feast of St. Partridge" when all my hopes were as rosy as a summer morning.

On the next night in a corner of the park at Brussels, lighted with lamps in faint imitation of a *café chantant* of the Paris *Bois*, and recalling on a small scale what one conceives Vauxhall to have been, there was a promenade concert. A military band was playing operatic and waltz music in a prettily-decorated orchestra. People were walking about, or were seated at small tables taking refreshment. The trees were green with spring leaves. Overhead there was a glorious moon.

I made a tour of the picturesque and lively scene. Disappointed at not finding the Harmers, I was taking a seat, some-

what disconsolately, when I saw, quite near to me, Mrs. Harmer the centre of a little group of men in animated conversation. They were a party of four, and to my great surprise Mrs. Harmer was speaking in French. My seat was in the shadow of a lamp, the light of which was obstructed by the trunk of a beech-tree. I could every now and then hear what was said, as the programme of the orchestra was broken by an interval for the refreshment of the performers. I seemed to have done Mrs. Harmer a double wrong, I had questioned her morals and her education. She was speaking French with an almost Parisian grace. On the other hand it was plain to me that Harmer did not understand French, and that the more daring of her three French admirers had not been slow to note the fact. He openly paid the lady a compliment, which, understood by the husband, would have assuredly brought George Harmer's clenched fist upon his face. It even startled the other two, and Harmer perceiving that something rather out of the way

had been said, looked up at his wife for an explanation. She turned the offensive compliment into a harmless but piquant *jeu d'esprit*, at which they all laughed; but there was a sneer on the sensual and vicious face of the Frenchman, who had evidently not once hesitated in his estimate of the lady, nor in his view of the want of respect in which she held her husband. At a sign which he gave to his companions, they rose, took off their hats, and walked away, the vicious one handing his cigar-case to George, which George declined, saying, at the same time, "Come, Julia, let us go."

"Is he truly your husband?" asked the Frenchman, in French.

"Yes, indeed he is; nothing is more certain," she said.

"Then you are a treasure he does not comprehend."

"You are too good," she replied, with something like a sarcastic smile.

"Will you meet me without him?"

"Write to me at the Poste Restante,

'Amelia B,' and if I consider you worthy of so much consideration, not to say risk, I will."

"My worthiness, I fear, consists chiefly in my capacity to make it shine with the purest diamonds that ever competed with the light of a lovely woman's eyes," he said, rising and bowing to Mr. Harmer.

"Then write at once," she answered, smiling in a way that had so disagreeably impressed me at Antwerp.

"What does the grinning idiot say?" asked George.

"That there is to be a royal *fête* in Brussels next week, and he would like to place his carriage at our disposal."

"He be hanged! What else?"

"That, as an artist, he presumes you are well acquainted with the Wertz Museum, and if not, that you ought to see it though it is hardly a place for ladies."

"Oh, indeed! Julia, he is a beast."

"Why did you introduce me to him over that wretched table d'hôte then?"

"Because he asked me."

"You should not do everything men ask you. Your reason is no better than my answer to your patron, Lord Hampfield, when he asked me why I married you."

"Ah, now you are unkind."

"No, I am not; it was only my fun. I like to say a smart thing—you know I do."

"Was it only a smart thing when you said, 'Yes, George, I will marry you?'"

"There, now, don't be a silly boy; come, let us go and have some supper. This is a stupid place after all."

"So it is, my dear," Harmer replied. "Come, we are always happiest when we are alone. Ah, Julia, you will never know how much I love you!"

"I know it now, dear," she said; and then pausing to survey the gardens, she added, "By the way, I don't see your Antwerp friend, who insisted upon treating us to *maitrank*, and spoiled his generosity with his fusty bits of history."

"Why, I thought you liked to hear all about Antwerp?"

"The wedding incident was well enough, but——ah! well, I think he was not a bad sort of fellow, and I wish he had kept his promise; I would like to have seen him again."

"So you will, often I hope," said George.

"Never, if I can help it!" I said to myself, as I watched them leave the gardens, and saw three French hats ostentatiously raised to Mrs. Harmer as she swept the ground with a train of crimson silk and Brussels lace.

I believe I do the goddess, whom Ulysses conquered, an injustice in using her name to even suggest the wickedness of this woman, who had beguiled an honest man of an honourable love. The reader will have an opportunity of holding the balances evenly between the two, before this narrative is ended. In that case he will of course dismiss from his fancy the poetic glamour which the immortal singer has thrown about the goddess (whose name has passed into

current use to denote a vile woman), and take into account only the fact of realistic evidence as to character which would be likely to appeal to the judicial mind of such a person as Mr. Justice Miller.

What a small world it is! Who would have dreamed that I should have encountered George Harmer on his wedding tour! And what a romantic world it is! Little did he think that I, whom he regarded as an aristocrat travelling for pleasure, was simply a common sailor on leave; and that my business at Brussels was to execute a trifling commission for my captain, the master of a Bristol barque.

I was destined at a later period to meet Father Gabriello at Antwerp though not as accidentally as I had met George Harmer and his wife; but between that time and the present there rolled raging seas; between then and now there occurred unlooked-for incidents of perils by land and water.

CHAPTER III.

I AM WRECKED AT SEA.

I think I was glad to get back to Rotterdam, and to my humble corner in the forecastle of the *Phoebe*. The captain received me cordially, and my shipmates were evidently glad to see me again. The captain's wife approved of my selection of the trinkets which I had made, in her interest, at the command of her husband. She was a cheery buxom woman of thirty, and it was a pleasant sight to see her about the vessel in all weathers.

There is something very humanising in a petticoat aboard ship. The entire forecastle agreed to that. Men saw the glimmer

of it during their labours, and thought of their wives and sweethearts, or of their mothers and sisters. One falls into a reflective habit at sea. A woman links the past and the present. She keeps the land green in your memory. Even old Dick Smith, a thorough sailor, said that after all it was a pleasant thing to sign articles for a vessel that had the captain's wife aboard, when the captain's wife was hearty and cheerful, and "didn't have no airs."

The other day I picked up a book by a very clever writer on nautical subjects, in which there was a brief but graphic description of a forecastle. It was called *My Watch Below*. It is not given to every author to have served before the mast; nor, having the experience, to depict the wild life that belongs to it. How vividly my memory recalled *The Phoebe*, as I read the author's tribute to "Jack," showing him in the midst of his prosaic and trying surroundings. I project my memory into the forecastle of the Bristol barque, and in spite of the general darkness, the miscellaneous

contents are in view—sea-chests spread about the floor, most of them lashed; oilskin coats swinging from nails in the stanchions; sea-boots and sou'-westers lying here and there; hammocks slung fore and aft; at night a sort of re-shuffling of these things, and men asleep; in the day-time the same rugged fellows regaling themselves on fat pork and dry biscuits with a relish that came rather from hunger than from the inviting character of the food; then changes of scene in the same confined space from sleeping or eating; hurried cries of "All hands!" at night, before you have had time to get into your first sleep; and also days and nights of calm when you could either sleep or talk; but at all times, in foul or pleasant weather, the forecastle comes out in the memory a mysterious place, the contents of which you can never define.

It was a satisfaction to me to read "A Seafarer's" tribute to Jack. My experiences fully endorse all he says in the sailor-men's favour. Had it not been for the gentle

consideration shown to me by the men who were first my fellow toilers, then my companions, and finally my shipmates on *The Phoebe*, I should, perhaps, have been lost during my first voyage, for I was more than once relieved of arduous duties, in bad weather, which I strove to perform, and in which I should have persevered at the risk of my life. The men forgave my inexperience, and shielded it out of respect for my earnestness and good intentions. Then in the hours of leisure, that come with specially fair weather, I made myself as agreeable as I could to the entire crew, and after a time was voted, next to Dick Smith, the best hand at a yarn on the ship; and in due time I dare say I should have become quite the cock of the fo'csle; but a serious incident occurred to cut short the joys and sorrows of both fo'csle and barque.

In return for yarns of the sea I told my mates yarns of the land, picked up on my travels here and there, anecdotes of Colonel Ernstone, stories of sport in Worcestershire, school experiences. They were simple-minded

unsophisticated men. My adventure at Dame Skinner's seminary became quite a favourite yarn. One night, beguiled by an extra glass of grog, in honour of the skipper's birth-day, served out at the request of his wife, I found myself telling the story of Laudnum Nannie and the pretty granddaughter who ran away; but, when I came to change the scene from Scarsdale to the Villa Verona, I altered the narrative entirely, and felt ashamed, as if I had been on the verge of exposing my tenderest feelings to a vulgar crowd. That I could talk of her at all, showed me that my wound was healing.

When my landsman yarns were exhausted I related to them the story of Ulysses, partly in the language of Pope, partly in the simple words of Charles Lamb, but mostly in the diction of the dear kind old Frenchman who first stirred my youthful pulse with incidents of the great classic romance. The adventures of Ulysses proved to be a never-ending theme. The illustrious Grecian's experiences were not considered "out of the way," for

"the olden days," some of the crew of *The Phoebe* having seen mermaids within hailing distance, two veterans having been twice wrecked on Cannibal Islands, several of them having seen wondrous things, all of them being willing to believe anything possible at sea, once you got out of your course and were at the mercy of wind and weather.

It was wonderful what strange romances and exhibitions of natural phenomena the experiences of these simple sailors covered, what thrilling sights they had seen, what curious things encountered, what mighty evidences of oceanic powers they had witnessed. They had hailed and boarded derelict ships, which looked as if they had been heading about since the days of Cabot, with queer mariners aboard who could speak no known language; they had picked up shipwrecked men, who had gone mad with exposure during days and nights of cold and stormy weather; they had seen dead men who, saved by life-buoys, had perished of cold and

hunger, and whose corpses went on navigating the broad ocean; they had encountered pirates in the Sulu seas, and being wrecked had had narrow escapes from savages; one of them had an old friend who fought with Nelson at Trafalgar; another served on board a yacht, the owner of which had stood out to sea in the very same vessel and witnessed the battle of the Nile; another had been in a fishing-smack off Newfoundland which was cut in two by an ocean steamer; old Dick Smith swore he had seen a mermaid and a merman having a family quarrel, one moonlight night, off Barbadoes; several of them had seen ghosts; and underlying even their most impossible yarns, there was always an undoubted substratum of truth. A man may keep to strict and sober facts, when he is relating adventures of the sea, and still have the most startling and impressive of narratives to relate.

Take for example "A Story from the Sea," which attracts my attention, as an ordinary paragraph in a local newspaper,

while I am writing this very chapter. In the North Pacific Ocean a Liverpool ship, "The Respigadera," spoke a strange craft which appeared to be cruising about quite aimlessly. Presently a small boat was lowered from the strange craft. The crew pulled for the Liverpool ship. Encouraged to go on board, they did so. Spoken to, they replied in a language nobody could understand. The English captain thought they might want provisions. He gave them food. They appeared to be grateful and left. It was noticed that the junk was covered with barnacles as if she had been many months at sea. There was a woman on board. So far as could be seen, she and the three men who had boarded the Respigadera were the sole occupants of the curious vessel. The incident recalls to a writer in *The Daily Telegraph* (that same nautical writer I will be bound whom I have already quoted) the old story, preserved in "Typee," concerning a whaler which had been so long absent that she was given up for lost. When last spoken she

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was cruising somewhere at the ends of the earth, her sails patched and quilted with ropeyarn, her spars fished with pipestaves, her rigging a mass of knots and splices, whilst the ends of her running gear, with the exception of the signal halliards and poop-downhaul, were led through snatch-blocks to the capstan, so that nothing was done without machinery. Her crew consisted of some twenty ancient men in the last stage of decay; her hull was encrusted with barnacles; and three pet sharks (regaled every day from the contents of the cook's bucket) followed in her wake. It should be added to this reminiscence of a delightful book that the name of the vessel was "The Perseverance," and that at the period when the history in question was being written the author supposed that she was still, tacking twice in the twenty-four hours, somewhere between two well-known points fully noted in each new edition of the South Sea charts.

After all, invented narrative is rarely more remarkable than the reality; while

the latter has the advantage, for there is a simplicity about truth, which, while it is impressive, leaves something for the imagination to work upon. Before I was in a position myself to verify the possibilities of unknown countries, I spent an evening once at Havre with the captain of a vessel who had commanded a trading steamer on the Amazon, and I came to the conclusion that my friend had "an eye for colour" that led him into extravagance of description. Since then I have seen —— But let us return to the track of our narrative proper.

When we lifted our anchor for the last voyage *The Phoebe* ever made I had intended to supplement "Ulysses" with the story of "The Ancient Mariner." But the pleasure of introducing the foc'sle to a new field of romance had to give place to the enactment of a series of real and terrible trials and troubles. It was the 11th of April that we sailed as before stated from Java for Sydney. On May 6 we experienced heavy gales from the N.N.W. which continuing with

great severity until the 10th of that month the ship had to be hove to. Hardly had the captain's instructions been carried out than the doomed vessel sprang a leak and started her stern-post. On the 12th the water was pouring into her at such a rate that we had to abandon her. There were only two boats. The captain and his wife, the boatswain, the steward, and six able-bodied seamen, got into the long boat. The carpenter, myself, three able-bodied, and two ordinary seamen, took to the pinnace. We had with us two bags of bread, some tins of meat, a small barrel of pork, a bag of biscuits, and a keg of water. The carpenter has stated that when we pushed off from the foundering ship we were so many degrees south and west; but as there is every reason to believe he was entirely wrong in his reckoning it is useless to repeat his figures. It was about five o'clock in the afternoon when we were compelled to shove off lest our boat should be stove in. When we abandoned the barque there must have been ten feet of water in

her, but her masts and spars were standing, and she was hove to. We pulled clear of her, and for a time kept by her. She was gradually sinking. For the time being I think we thought more of her than of ourselves. We were sorry for her. It was as if we were assisting at the death-bed of a dear friend. Somehow I found myself thinking of my father. It seemed as if I heard the funeral bell tolling at Scarsdale. Then I was in the shadow of Breedon Hills with my uncle, and I suppose I must have gone to sleep, worn out with fatigue, for in a little while it was dark and I thought I was at the Villa Verona.

It turned out that a sea-fog had suddenly come on and hidden the ship, as if Neptune, willing to spare us the last sad scene of all, had drawn a curtain between us and the barque, leaving the distressed ship to founder alone. In the darkness we also parted company with the long boat, and to this day nothing more has been heard of it or those who were forced to trust themselves

in her to the tender mercies of the sea. I am a religious man, and never go to bed without praying to God and thanking Him for the mercies he has vouchsafed to me; but I sometimes find myself questioning the efficacy of prayer when such a fine boat's crew goes down while less worthy are saved. This of course is wrong, and only shows that a man is indeed born in sin and shapen in iniquity.

It is the old story from the Pagan times to these. The sea will have tribute from poor humanity. The companions of Ulysses had to succumb to storm and tempest, and to the barbarism of savage countries. To-day we navigate the ocean on the same conditions, so far as Nature is concerned, but with such new and surprising aids that one wonders how the ancient mariners, even outside the mythical days of Ulysses, succeeded in sailing their cockle-shells of ships to and fro over the great waters. I shall never forget how cheerily my companions in the ship's pinnace braved the dangers and hard-

ships of several days and nights at sea, cold and wet, sharing among them bread literally soaked with sea-water, taking the labour in turns with honest manly fairness, each keeping from the other his fears that we were destined to be starved or drowned.

It was on the fifth day of our lonely and miserable voyage that we noticed a great change in the temperature, and at night we thought we sighted land. A dead calm fell upon the sea, and with it a soft humid heat. We thought we saw lights ahead. But we had so often thought so that we came to the conclusion, if we did see lights now it was only the result of some phosphorescent condition of the sea. Hope had begun to fade out with us. We were growing weak and despondent. Our water had given out on the fourth day. But on this eventful fifth, before the night was over, it rained. We stripped ourselves and welcomed it. It was a comfort to be warm, for we had at first suffered from cold winds; now we rejoiced in a tropical heat. One of the able-bodied

seamen, who claimed to have been wrecked in years gone by on a cannibal island, said he should not wonder if we were somewhere off New Guinea or Torres Straits. The carpenter thought he had once seen a sight like this off Fiji. Another seaman guessed we were off Sulu or the Philippines. It had been discovered, when too late, that we had only an ordinary pocket compass on board, and there was much doubt as to the correctness of its register. With ever so good a one, we had no means of taking observations, and we had to be content with our lives and our hopes. The old salt who had that experience of disaster already mentioned said he hoped the lights we thought we had seen were not the native fires of the Bulonagan islands.

We asked him why. The carpenter recalling Ulysses said he did not care if we were on the coast of Lestrygon itself so that we were near land. The old salt said he had no doubt we were near land. He could smell it; and he could hear the breakers. We tried to

realise these hopes for ourselves. I could smell nothing but the salt sea, hear nothing but the occasional sob of it against the bow of the boat, as the pinnace rose and fell gently with the swell of the calm ocean. Once I thought I heard Fridoline's harp; once I felt sure I heard the soft singing notes of a violoncello; and I asked the carpenter if he heard anything like music. He said no, he was not even blessed with a singing in his ears. The old salt said I was a trifle light-headed, and he gave me, I believe, the last drain of rum which he had brought from the ship in an old Birmingham flask.

If those lights meant the Bulonagans, said the veteran, we were what they called in Shoreditch out of the frying-pan into the fire. What fire-arms had we? It was dark as pitch all the time we were talking. Well, the carpenter said he had a brace of pistols; but he questioned if his ammunition was not wet. One of the A.B.'s said there was a loaded musket in the boat, several flasks of powder, some bullets, buck-shot, and caps.

There were also two cutlasses, and every man had a good knife.

As soon as it should be day, the veteran advised us to look to our arms. Something told him we were becalmed off the Bulonagans, and that not many hours would pass before the natives boarded us.

"Well, and what then, mate?" asked the carpenter.

"Bloodshed!" he said.

"Cannot we conciliate the natives?" I asked.

"What is that?" was the reply.

"Make friends with them."

"Perhaps; if we can make them believe we are strong enough to force our friendship."

"Have they firearms?" I asked.

"No," said the veteran, "they fight with poisoned darts and spears."

"We must elect a leader," I said, "in case we have to fight."

"And we shall," said the veteran, "if we are in the latitude I suspect; our only

chance of escape will be in some man of-war cruising about; but it's just a mighty off chance that is."

We elected the veteran to be captain. He was to have the carpenter's pistols; the carpenter was to have charge of the musket; one of the cutlasses was confided to me; another to an A.B., and the others were to use their knives. Every possible effort was to be made towards a pacific understanding with the natives. No single hostile movement was to be made unless we were attacked. If we should be unfortunate enough to fail in our policy of conciliation, then we were to sell our lives dearly under the leadership of the senior A.B.

With the dawn we saw the land. I think we all saw it at at once.

"The Bulonagans!" exclaimed the veteran.

"You may be wrong," said the carpenter.

"I wish I might be," answered the vet.

"You thought you heard breakers last night; there is no surf yonder; the water lies on the sand there as it does at Shanklin on a July morning."

"Mates, you say I am to be your captain?" said the senior A.B.

"Aye, aye!" we all answered.

Dawn almost means daylight in the tropics. As the sun shot up into the sky with a god-like radiance, our dispositions for peace or war were made as already indicated.

We could see the yellow sands on the beach not more than a couple of miles away, and the radiant greens of tropical verdure. The sea looked like a liquid carpet sparkling with gems. During our perilous voyage I had more than once said to myself, "it will be no matter if I die." Now my desire was strongly to live. A reminiscence of Italy shot through my mind.

Presently we could see a movement on the beach. We were evidently at the mouth of a river that ran inland, and we were

drifting into the current of it, going in slowly with the tide. Before we had fairly arrived at this conclusion we saw that canoes were putting off towards us.

In less than ten minutes three canoes were well within sight. Very soon we could see that there were five men and two women in each. The natives were copper-coloured and of a very dark hue. The canoes were curiously built. They were literally three pieces of wood, a bottom and two sides, fastened together. This was evidently not the first experience which the savages had of a fugitive crew. Shipwreck was a calamity of which they knew more than we imagined. Several of them clambered aboard the pinnace and commenced jabbering and making what we interpreted into signs of friendship. I gave one of them a tobacco-box. The carpenter gave another a scarf-handkerchief. The veteran eyed them askance, and kept his pistols ready. Both men and women were dressed very much alike; that is, they wore a sort of sarong

about their loins. The women were tatooed, and had necklaces of stones, and wore what appeared to be pearls. The men were tatooed only on the breast. The leader of the expedition was not so dark as the rest, and had a villainous and ferocious countenance.

When we had given such presents as we had to give they leaped into the water and sprang aboard their canoes beckoning us to follow. We took up our oars to do so, one of the A.B. seamen remarking that "they is friendly surely, for they baint armed, nere a one of them." This had already struck us all I presumed as a favourable sign. The veteran shook his head and eyed them watchfully. All of a sudden, instead of the canoes putting off, I saw the women handing spears and clubs (which had evidently been lying handy in the bottoms of the canoes) to the men. My mates, with the exception of our newly-elected captain, were off guard. My warning and his came almost simultaneously with the attack. The natives

leaped upon us. The ferocious leader fell dead pierced by a well-aimed shot from one of the veteran's pistols; but the poor old salt was literally spitted with a spear the next moment. Two of the other able-bodied seamen were killed with clubs before they had time to use their cutlasses. I struck a native through the neck and fell into the water as I did so; whereupon I was instantly rescued and dragged into a canoe by one of the attendant women. The two ordinary seamen fought valorously, but were speedily overpowered and their brains beaten out. Though the carpenter cut one of his assailants down with a cutlass-stroke that almost severed the head from the body, the natives only seized and bound him. Then they flung overboard their own dead and ours (having stripped the bodies), handed the cutlasses, the still loaded musket, and other things, to the women, who packed them into the canoes, and proceeded to paddle the pinnace towards the shore, where

by this time a great crowd of natives were assembled.

I never saw the carpenter again, nor heard of him until quite recently. I found under curious circumstances an account of his escape which had been dictated to a reporter of *The Telegraph* or *Daily News*. The story I need hardly say interested me deeply, the more so that it inferred I had been eaten by cannibals. I wish I possessed the faculty to put my own narrative into as few paragraphs as those which sufficed for the carpenter and his collaborator. The entire story did not occupy much more than two columns of the newspaper, though it covered a portion of the log of the lost vessel, the details of her last moments, the sufferings of five days and five nights in an open boat at sea, the attack of the natives, the carpenter's detention among them for several days, and his final, almost miraculous, escape. As he and I are to-day the only survivors (that is, if he be still living, and one may fairly say *if* in the case of a ship's carpenter), it will fit the

course of my own narrative best that I should give his version of certain incidents of our disaster that are out of my own knowledge, and the particulars of which came to me with singular opportuneness, and with something of the grim flavour of a message from the dead.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CARPENTER'S REPORT.

"Dick Smith," says the carpenter in the newspaper report, "the able-bodied seaman whom we elected captain for the time being, was right in predicting that we was driftin' on to the Bulonagan islands, which I reckon is somewhere off New Guinea, between the Fijis and the Philippines. If you looks at the chart you'll see as there is several islands in that latitude, some o' them not marked proper, and some there is as is most like not on the chart at all. Dick Smith, the weteran as we called him, told us this; and, says he, when we was a nearing them 'I can smell 'em,' which was the tropical wegetation as

he smelt, no doubt. Well, it was after the fighting as I told you of that they cleared the boat, and kep' me tied, and begun to paddle for the beach. I could see my mate, the orniry seaman as I spoke on, in one of the canoes. His name were Horris, a young-ish chap,—well, say about thirty, as come aboard original at Bristol, a swell in his way, as had had a row with his governor, or somebody; and our captain, he took a fancy to him like, through a knowin' a Gloucester bargee, as owned his own wessel, and made much of this Horris; and it was wonderful how soon he picks up his dooties, though it was not surprisin' as we all got to like the chap. He was the life and soul of the fo'csle, what with his yarns and his songs, and one thing and another, and, when I thinks of his fate among them brute-minded savages, I a' most wish I could a' bin with him to ha' made a last stand as it were, and died game, comin' on them sudden like when they left us at liberty, as they did me. Two chaps when they are together in adversity they

can work together in thought and deed, but one by hisself among savages is a poor look out, I can tell you.

"But, as I was a sayin', they paddles to the shore, the canoe leadin'. Dick Smith was wrong about hearin' breakers. We just slid up the beach as quiet and easy as if we was at Margate, except for the row as the savages made a yelling and dancing like mad. The orniry seaman, Horris, stepped ashore with his captors, and was led away into the interior. I could see him going up a steep-ish path on the high ground as bordered the beach, and he disappeared with about twenty natives a following. Poor chap, I can see him now in my mind's eye, as the sayin' is, turn at the top of the bank just afore goin' on the other side, and wave his hand, as much as to say 'Good by, Carpenter, old fellow.' And then he was gone—food, says I to myself, for the Bulonagans, as I shall be when they're ready for their dinners. Ah! you may smile at that, and I dessay the thought do seem odd, but you do have queer

ideas when you find yourself stuck 'a-tween wind and water, as I may be said to ha' bin at that moment, a-wishing as we'd all stopped aboard and gone down with *The Phoebe*.

"When we got ashore they undid such of the thongs as prevented me from walking, and then they hauled up the ship's pinnace high and dry, and motioned to me as I were to go with the party in a direction quite different to that where the orniry seaman Horris had gone. I made signs for that direction, but they pushed me the 'tother way and threatened me with spears. We walked on for a mile or so to a creek, and then we turned into the interior, and after going about a mile through jungle we come to a clearing and a few huts made of leaves and fenced round with bamboo canes. Then I was as it seemed to me handed over to the chief, an old but strong looking savage, who felt me over as if I'd bin a ox. At this I gathered they begun to tell their adventures and all about the fight, shouting and scream-

ing as they did so, and brandishing their spears and clubs. It seemed to me as they was a keeping something back, for the old savage was asking them something which they kep' on not telling him; till at last one of 'em as had a wound in the leg came forward, and pointing to it, imitated Dick Smith a shooting with his pistol, and then flung up his arms and pretended to fall dead, At this the chief's face was terrible to see. His eyes stared out of his head, and the veins in his temples was like knots. He siezed a wretch who was nighest him and flung him to the ground, and then, taking from a girdle a great knife, rushed upon me; but, just as I thought he was a going to do for me, he gave a great cry as if he was in pain, and went into his 'ouse or hut or wigwam, whatever he might have called it.

"Then if you believe me it was like Pandemonium broke loose, what with dancing and yelling and the banging of a sort of drum; and a lot of girls and women comes out all of a sudden with drink and food, and

they give to me as if I was a friend. The drink was a sort of spirit, and bimeby it made 'em all wild drunk, and so they continued all night. I forgot to say as they undid me and give me free use of my limbs, but three fierce savages with spears was told off as my guard. I could see that, and they kep' a pretty close watch on me, showing me every now and then as they meant to kill me if I tried to escape.

"Next day they gave me more freedom and this increased, and I began to have hopes as I was not bein' kep' to be eaten, seeing as they fed me badly and let me get thinner and thinner, and I was pretty considerable weakened by the time the next comer turned up. This was as far as I can reckon twenty-five days after the murder of my comrades in the boat. They had took me along to the beach, and there I see a ship's boat in tow of several canoes, and it turned out as there was a Portuguese sailor aboard. This man told me later on as the Bulonagans had captured him something the same way as

they had took me. They had enticed a ship-wrecked crew on shore and then murdered them, all but him; and the next day they brought ashore an Indian sailor, a Lascar, I suppose he was, and he spoke a little English; and just what I had been told by the Portuguese seemed to be his fate, so there had been some pretty bad weather in them seas. He was one of a crew as had escaped from a wreck, all but him to be slayed as my poor mates was, only neither of the other crews had had a fight for it as we had.

"I wondered why we was saved, and the Lascar I gathered thought it might be to get rewards for us from some passing ship, for he said we was not far out of the track of Pacific steamers. The natives allowed us to talk together, but continued yelling and threatening us; now appearing friendly and the next minute blood-thusty. At night we encamped on the beach, the canoes being turned up as a sort of shelter, the ship pinnace on her side, and fires lighted,

though it was a hot summer, as it seemed to me. The next day we was separated, me and the Portuguese and the Indian, and three days after I was took to another part of the island, still near the coast, where I could see other islands a few miles away. This part was a spot as I should say they went to occasionally, as there seemed no village near; however they run up huts by a stream as came down a hill-side and made out to the sea-shore. While we was here there was no women with us, but the three guards as was over me kep' by me all the time. We hadn't been here two nights afore a number of other savages arrived. They was lighter coloured than the others and had more on. Their weapons was also more ornamented, such as the handles of their spears, and they carried short swords made of a hard wood and bound with a metal like silver. There was a great palaver, and they smoked pipes. I signified as I would like to smoke, and the new savages I could see wished me to smoke though they had not appeared to

notice me much. My three guards seemed to object, but the head of the strange tribe stood up and gave me a pipe; it was made of wood, with a straw stem, and the tobacco was curious to the taste but comforting. I motioned how grateful I was, and as well as I could signified as I wished they would not leave me with the Bulonagans. They looked as if they understood and seemed as if they pitied me. When you don't understand a language it is surprising how you get into the way of reading faces.

"It was the next day when the new party of savages as I most fancied had a sort of farewell palaver with my party, and there was more smoking, some of the canoes being already launched. If I died for it I determined to go with them. I could see as they was powerful and feared, and I thought I might have a better chance of escape from them than the Bulonagans. When the chief as allowed me to smoke appeared to be going, I flung myself in a sort of appealing way before him and he patted me on the

shoulder; but one of the three seized me and raised his spear as if to strike. The chief of the departing tribe looked at me as much as to say 'it won't do for me to interfere, but if you can get into my canoe anyhow when its shoved off we are not the chaps to stop and give you up.' His canoe was quite as big as the ship's pinnace and was manned by a dozen rowers or paddlers; I daresay it would be called by the Sulus or more civilised people a prahu. Just as it shoved off I leaped into it and crawled towards the stern, and the next minute I hears a great yell, and we was a going through the water like a steam-launch. I looked up bimeby and see as the Bulonagans had launched their canoes and came after us, but the Naudiks (for these were my new masters) were too far ahead. They paddled away as if nothing had happened, taking no notice of either the pursuers or me. We continued in this way for hours, nobody speaking except once in a way the chief as if giving an order.

"It was nigh upon morning before the

Naudiks could have rested much, though they lay upon their oars or paddles once in a way; and before the sun was up I see the smoke of a steamer; and they see it too just as quick as me. All the whole flotilla was ordered to heave to, and the chief in the big canoe stands up and palavers. Then the paddles was shipped and rations was served, which was rice and fruit and a sort of drink that tasted something like raw spirits and flat beer; and then there was smoking all round, and after that some of them jumps into the sea and swims and dives and larks about. The chief, I could gather from his manner and what followed, ordered them to give me food and to let me smoke and make much of me, and in due course he points to the steamer and nods at me and touches his breast, and then points again as much as to say 'we go put you on steamer,' and I nods and makes signs to thank him. All this time the steamer was making towards us, though of course she did not know it, and if it had not been for a thinking of

that poor young chap Horris I should have felt happy, though, mind you, I also felt sorry enough for them other shipmates as had been killed. But it appeared to my thinking as that edicated mate of mine, though no more nor a orniry seaman, his fate was perhaps the worst. As you say, he might have escaped, there is no knowin', but they took him I'm afeared into the interior of the island, and poor old Dick Smith he swore that they was just as much man-eaters as them savages wot Ulissis come across. You arske wot I knows of Ulissis, why that ere Horris as I keep a telling you of he was telling us about that captain's travels continual. He was a Greek, so Horris said, as was well known at one time and navigated all the known seas of his day afore Captain Cook voyaged round the world.

"Bimeby the steamer went on another tack, and the smoke got less, and then the order was given to make for her; and the canoes went away as if the hobject was to

intercept her; and to make a long story short we come up with her afore night, and she proved to be a sort of coasting steamer as run between Singapore and Sulu and about them seas; but this time she had made a trip to New Guinea, and had bin induced to go out to some islands to the eastward on a little private trading expedition, which was the reason of our sighting her.

"The captain was a Scotchman, and when he see me he takes me aboard and I tells him what has happened, and he has the Naudiks aboard and gives them a knife or two, a baccy box, some old sardine tins, a lot of beads, and a roll of cloth, and thanks them in their own language, and the chief gives him a spear and invites him to come and see the Naudiks and trade with them. The vessel was called *The Pioneer*, and the captain he told me as I had had a tightish narrow escape, and he says the Bulonagans is werry little known and never visited by ships of any kind, not even cruisers, and that

the island is not named on the charts, but comes in among the unexplored spots you sees a hindicated on the maps, and he was quite prepared to believe as they would eat human flesh though he had never heard of Ulissis.

"I was took to Singapore eventual and well treated, and the Consul he put me in the way of getting to London and I was advised by a passenger, as was in the newspaper line, to go along of him to the newspaper office and spin my yarn to the editor; and that's the whole truth; and now I'm a goin' to Bristol to report to the owners of *The Phoebe*, which I think I ought to have done afore coming here, but you have promised to make it all right with them, and it is as you say for the public good as my statement should appear in print; and perhaps the friends of Mr. Horris, as no doubt is a swell, you thinks will send out a hexpedition to investigate about him."

And this was the carpenter's story, beguiled from him as intimated in the last

few lines of his narrative, in the public interest; and I have since been told that it made a great sensation, the greater that several distinguished aristocratic families fancied they saw in Mr. Horris a missing heir. But nobody appears to have imagined for a moment that Horris the orniry sailor was Horace Durand, though the Ulysses clue might have been expected to arrest the attention of my uncle if he had seen it. Neither he nor Colonel Ernstone ever saw the report, though it was headed "Wreck of the Phoebe —Terrible adventures with Savages—The Carpenter's Narrative." It is also quite possible that none of my present readers may remember coming across this incident of the awful gales that disturbed the Pacific and Indian Ocean during the fatal spring when *The Phoebe* and many other sailing-ships came to grief. It is none the less strange that among a bundle of old French newspapers on board a P. and O. steamer, many eventful months after the carpenter was interviewed by *The Daily Telegraph* or the *Daily News*,

I found his statement, which had been translated into French, and published in the *Débats*.

If the carpenter be still alive the following pages referring to my detention among the Bulonagans will interest him not less than his narrative has interested me.

CHAPTER V.

A CAPTIVE TO MAN-EATERS.

As I said before, I was no sooner landed than I was hurried away into the interior of the island.

It turned out that I was considered the booty of the women. The ladies of Bulonagan were not a particularly privileged set. No Married Woman's Property Act had been passed in their interest by a conscientious male legislature. They had no Dramatic School of Art specially founded to save sensitive aspirants for histrionic honours from the drudgery of a provincial probation. No Female Protection Societies existed in Bulonagan to look after their physical and moral

welfare; no Social Science Congress lectured them on the hygiene of dress. Nevertheless, without these legal, social, and scientific aids, they one and all discarded tightly-laced corsets and high-heeled boots. They held themselves as erect as if they had been practising the Boucicaultian *regime* of head-weights all their lives. Their figures were lithe and graceful; and if their faces had been beautiful then indeed they would have been perfect creatures.

Unhappily the Bulonagan women were decidedly ugly, and as if to establish their sex beyond dispute, having indulged in no unnatural reduction of the waist and feet, they dragged down the ears with ornaments, and tatooed their cheeks and foreheads. Married women had three jagged lines just above the eyebrows, maidens were embellished with circular designs upon the cheeks. Apart from these blemishes they had broad mouths, vicious-looking eyes, and a general aspect of countenance that was abominable.

And I was their especial property! This was the result of some mysterious bargain of the men with the women. I represented a sort of annual gift in acknowledgment of their assistance on sea-raids; a tribute ordained by the god of the Bulonagans, when it was believed he had drunk too much "arackie." If once in so many moons the women chose to rescue a fugitive from death he was theirs. They made him their slave, or they ate him, whichever pleased them best. This gift was not only regarded as the result of the intoxication of the god of the island, but was considered to be indicative of the contempt the Bulonagans entertained for the white man. They had had no real intercourse whatever with Europeans, and were regarded even by other dusky inhabitants of these eastern seas with fear, and dread, and loathing. They had, nevertheless, powerful neighbours, such as the Kututus and the Naudiks, who were superior to this sense of fear. The Bulonagans were, in short, outcasts among outcasts, barbarians despised of barbarians, and, I

think, had I known this before instead of after my captivity, I should have been inclined to drown myself rather than have risked the perils of detention among such a people.

Nausicao saw that Ulysses was properly clothed for presentation at the court of Alcinous. Lofulu, the ex-chief's daughter, whose spoil I was, acted in quite a contrary fashion, distributing my garments among her maids, for so I venture to call a dozen young women who appeared to be in attendance upon her. She was a tall shapely savage, with her ears, however, dragged down upon her shoulders. The weather was frightfully hot, and I was glad to be relieved of some of my garments, and, though I did anything but laugh at the time, I have often done so since, at the remembrance of the ridiculous figures Lofulu and her women cut in my apparel.

After a long weary march over paths that looked like tracks made by animals, we came to a small village, where we were

received by some thirty or forty natives of both sexes. I was conducted to a hut or house of larger dimensions than the others —a long low building surrounded by a stockade. Here I was presented to an old chief who had been the head man of the tribe, but was now deposed and condemned to a life of royal ease. So soon as a Bulonagan chief shows signs of physical decay, he is put aside for a more stalwart warrior. They believe in youth, on this desolate and uncivilised island, just as much as Disraeli did when he held up for the world's admiration Nelson, Clive, John de Medici, Gustavus Adolphus, Gaston de Foix, and Innocent III. the greatest of the popes. At the same time the Bulonagans require in their chiefs a powerful physique. They would be too clever to appoint for any great service of arms a decrepid and worn-out chief; but not clever enough to estimate the possibilities of youthful enthusiasm in a weakly frame. I remember Colonel Ernstone telling me a story of the boyish days of Malcolm,

the famous general. The East India Board of Directors, struck with his fragile and almost childish appearance, hesitated about sending him out with an important command. "My little man," said one of the directors, "what would you do if you met Hyder Ali?" "Do?" replied the young soldier, "I would out with my sword and cut off his head, sir." "And I believe you would," was the director's reply.

The old ex-chief was Lofulu's father. She and her attendant women were the aristocratic maidens of the Bulonagans, intended for the wives of chiefs. They were the leaders of Bulonagan society, the great ladies of the Bulonagan Mayfair. At least I came to this conclusion for various reasons, but I did not stay long enough in the island to arrive at a complete and definite opinion as to their real and proper status.

They treated me with more consideration in the first days of my captivity than I expected to receive, giving me a bed-room (if

an apartment constructed of bamboo, through the crevices of which they watched me continually, can be called a room), and allotting to me a male guard of the most revolting type. It seems that in Bulonagan, while they despise physical weakness and have no faith in the wisdom of old age, they are in awe of anything like a great physical deformity. The guard whom they placed over me was among them a person of great distinction. They called him Datutong. He was a hideous dwarf of great strength, a blear-eyed, bow-legged, broad-shouldered (one shoulder much higher than the other), splay-footed (his feet were those of a giant) Caliban, an able-bodied imp of darkness. Although I do not know that I had ever remembered reading Hans of Iceland after I was a boy at Scarsdale (and I have never seen that wonderful book since), memories of Hans leaped into my mind almost the moment I saw him, and all of a sudden I felt that my head was in danger of being converted into a drinking cup, replenished

with something more awful than the coal-black wine that was such a favourite liquor with the Macleods of Dare.

This Datutong wore a heavy short wooden sword, mounted with a silver band, and he carried a long spear. He was very dusky, his hair grey, and his nose Bardolphian in hue and character.

I recall that the first night ashore among these wretches I slept as soundly as if I had been at "The Cedars" and on good terms with my uncle; and the next morning I wondered how I could have slept through the bad odours and the numerous insects that infested my couch. Soon after sunrise I was aroused to bathe in a lake whither all the village repaired. But for the presence of my companions I could have imagined myself in Paradise, so perfectly lovely were the surroundings. With the Bulonagans around me it seemed as if Satan might have stormed the citadel of heaven and just taken possession of the land for which negro minstrelsy is continually preparing its golden

slippers. I once heard a negro preacher in an American church describe the plains of Paradise. It was a tropical picture which the black orator drew, and it was crowded with coloured people. I can now easily imagine what sort of a scene the negro idea was.

After the bath we all more or less wandered aimlessly for a time in the shade, but presently came to a sort of barbaric temple, made of bamboos and dried palm-leaves. Thence came a savage who was, I suppose, its high priest. We made a circle round about him and he handed to Datntong a bowl of oil, with which certain of the men and women anointed their bodies. Then the entire tribe gave three distinct yells or whoops, and the priest fetched from the temple a ponderous jar from which he regaled them with a liquor that was quick in its intoxicating powers. It was only drunk by the men, who under its influence danced and shrieked, fought imaginary battles with imaginary foes, and at last fell insensible upon the ground. This I afterwards learnt

was their reward for the capture of *The Phoebe's* pinnace.

On the next day there was celebrated, at the same place, the recognition by the god Banganigan of the sovereign and other rights of Lofulu and her friends over the captive white man rescued in or after battle. Led by my swarthy Caliban, and accompanied by the women, I was requested by signs to stand at the entrance to the grove which surrounded the barbaric temple. Presently the priest, followed by the women walking in solemn procession, came to me and led me into the interior of the place. It was a long low apartment. On the floor there were several mats made out of European cloth (the plunder of wreckage, the loot of murderous raids on fugitive boats) and others woven of some strange fibre. On the walls were hung a miscellaneous collection of skulls (trophies of knife and club) and European weapons. The cutlasses and the musket of *The Phoebe* were already among the decorations. How soon my head should

be added to the museum of curiosities appeared to me to be a topic of conversation among the ladies of the court. In the centre of the apartment was a carved log, which might have served both for an altar or a butcher's block.

I suspect I must have had quite the appearance of a victim either for torture or death. My dress was a sort of sarong, something like a Highlander's frock. Lofulu wore my sailor's jacket (in spite of the heat); another young lady wore my handkerchief as a scarf; a third had converted my waistcoat into a head-dress; a fourth wore my flannel shirt as a petticoat; and my guard had hung my boots round his neck by the laces. This Datutong was, I afterwards learned, a person of great distinction. The utmost solemnity of demeanour was observed by the entire party. I felt more annoyed than frightened, more humiliated than alarmed. Once I was almost tempted to rush upon the savage, who had converted my boots into lockets, and die fighting. The moment it

dawned upon me that I was being nothing more nor less than dedicated to the sacrifice, this impulse was very strong. Strange to say it was checked by a sudden recollection of my father's reading of the adventures of Ulysses in the cave of Polyphemus, and the moral which he drew for me never to do anything rashly. I remembered also that he said cunning sometimes overcame strength, that it was always darkest before the dawn, and that *Nil desperandum* was a motto to lay to heart.

It is very odd what strange things will occur to you in the height of danger, and on the eve of what appears to be certain death. A man tries to murder you, and you have afterwards a vivid recollection of the colour of his neck-tie. Your house is blown up by an explosion, and the first thing you remember is that three years before a patch of plaster had given way in your dining-room, which you now recall as a warning of the coming fall of the entire terrace. Standing by the side of that chopping-block of the cannibal

Bulonagans (for they were indeed man-eaters as poor Dick Smith had declared them to be) I thought first of my father and the Cyclops, and then of my uncle Grantley and what he would think if he could see me in my Bulonagan attire and in the company that then surrounded me. He would probably have remarked, with an air of satirical disappointment, that my poor mother was right in predicting I should come to no good, and that after all Welby understood character better than he did.

Standing by the altar or the decorated block, I was surrounded by my captors, who joined hands and encompassed me. Then the priest signified that I should advance towards him and receive a sort of necklet of stones, shells, and what appeared to be pearls, with a pendant of wood, two or three inches long, shaped like a fork or trident.

All at once I thought I had misconceived the character and intentions of the savages. They were about to make me a valuable present, preliminary to setting me at liberty.

"The Lascar was right," I thought. "They will make much of me and then go forth to put me on board some foreign ship and obtain their reward."

I stepped forward with alacrity towards the chief priest or butcher or whatever he might be properly called, and the moment I did so the entire crowd broke up the circle, danced, yelled, shrieked, and laughed, several of them indulging in acts of contortion which would have excited the envy of the Vokes family had they witnessed the extraordinary performance. This rather heightened than depressed my hopes of ultimate freedom. The chief placed the ornamental collar round my neck, and as he did so the women joined hands and danced round me again, with expressions that I could see were intended to be joyous.

The truth was, instead of all this meaning that I was to be released, it demonstrated that I had been "condemned to the oven," in token of the good pleasure of the Bulonagan god.

I learnt at a subsequent period that the yell of delight set up when I advanced towards the priest or butcher, was for the reason that I had put out my right leg first, which was the accepted sign of my destiny as food for Lofulu and her favoured women.

Ever since this grim discovery I have never heard speculative passengers betting as to which foot the American pilot would place first on the ocean steamer's deck, when leaving his own boat to take charge of the passenger ship, without feeling a peculiar thrill, almost of horror.

CHAPTER VI.

I MAKE THE ACQUAINTANCE OF THE IRISH KING OF KUTUTU.

It is hard to realise the fact that there are still existing in this nineteenth century man-eating savages. Such stories you think may be all very well in "The Odyssey," and even there the idea may be another allegory of Time.

You would not probably have believed, unless recently assured by a newspaper correspondent, that there exists to this day the hideous punishment of "keelhauling" in Egypt. You do not dream of the other tortures which are part of the legal *régime* of the successors to Pharaoh. There is nothing worse

in the rites of Bulonagan, so far as physical pain is concerned, than the march of Russian prisoners to Siberia; and Parisian epicures to-day eat horse, which to my thinking is only the next step to eating man. Even in some parts of England it is not an uncommon thing for a person to have his ear or his nose bitten off by a contestant in a drunken brawl.

Although the Bulonagans are as wicked a type of savage as the old Fijians, I saw nothing in their island more barbarous than the old English ducking-stool, the crank, or the thumb-screw; while the records of the Italian inquisition are far ahead of anything in the way of torture that the history of the Persians, the North American Indians, or the Bulonagans can identify. In judging the natives among whom I was a captive, therefore, I am bound to say that the worst thing I know of them is that they eat human flesh.

It is well established that in remote parts of the Fiji islands the savages still eat their

human victims. A recent traveller in the Dutch territories of Borneo interviewed an old Tring Dyak, who acknowledged to eating seventy persons. Reports of missionary labours in Fiji within the last ten or fifteen years bristle with incidents of cannibalism. As late as 1851 fifty bodies of a tribe, slain in battle by another tribe, were cooked and eaten at Namena in Fiji. The oven was a leading institution there, far more so than it is in Bulonagan, where human flesh is looked upon as a luxury for great occasions.

There are few men I suspect who have been dedicated to the oven that can say they have ever escaped. Mr. Herman Melville, who was a captive for four months among the natives of a valley of the Marquesas islands, may be quoted against me by some of my readers; but in the first place it is pretty clear that he was never formally given over for sacrifice; and in the next place it has been doubted by very able critics whether Mr. Melville's alleged history is not entirely

apocryphal. We live in an age of unbelief, and I should not wonder that critics will be found to question some of the details of my experiences, even though the shipwreck of *The Phoebe*, and the carpenter's report, have appeared in the London daily papers, and been translated into both French and German for publication in the *Débats* and the *National Zeitung*; and in spite of the fact that a year or two ago I myself published a curious incident of my stay among Sulu pearl-divers, signed with my name, in a singularly veracious paper called *Society*. It is true nobody questioned the honesty of that narration. Doubters were probably deterred by a footnote of justification from the travels of a reputable writer who knows the countries of the Eastern and the Pacific seas, even more intimately than I do. Footnotes in a work exercise, I believe, a deterrent influence upon critics who are in a hurry. I had serious thoughts in this department of my autobiography of quoting Strabo, Brooke, Mundy, Gulliver, Boyle, Bock, Spenser, Stanley,

Thomas Moore, Colonel Knox, Barnet Phillips, Alden, and other distinguished travellers, in a series of elaborate footnotes; but I am advised that it is better to rely on my own name, as a guarantee of truthfulness, rather than attempt to back up the veracity of my adventures with evidence of other remarkable events from historic sources. I shall be tempted, I fear, in one or two instances, to use the footnote notwithstanding.

On the day following the gift of the extraordinary necklet, with which my person was now adorned, I was aroused from a fitful slumber, early in the morning, by the sounds of what appeared to me to be a drum and fife. I began to fear that I was delirious, from hunger and anxiety, for I had eaten but very little of the food which formed the *menu* of the Bulonagan banquets. I listened as Jessie Brown might have done for the pibroch of the Highlanders going to the relief of Lucknow. The sound came nearer and nearer, and all the village was astir. My guard intimated that I was to "get up

quick," as he wanted to join his friends who were going forth to meet the coming guests or foes. I "hurried up," as my American friends say, with all dispatch, and soon found myself in the thick of a throng that continually uttered a word which seemed to me like "Kututu!"

What astonished me most was the positive fact that some person was playing a penny whistle, that the tune emitted therefrom was "Garry Owen," and that a drum was being beaten to the familiar melody by way of keeping time.

Presently at a bend of the narrow path, which was shaded by tall palms and a wild fringe of impenetrable jungle, there appeared a party of savages dressed in gay colours, and of a far superior intellectuality to the Bulonagans. In their midst was a tall warrior, far lighter in colour than the others, who was playing upon a tin-whistle, similar to those which are common among the youth of English cities, and by his side was a grinning barbarian beating some-

thing not unlike an Indian tum-tum. The whistler wore a unique head-dress of feathers (rather suggestive of North America than the countries of the Eastern seas), a pair of decided linen trousers, shoes or boots, and a loose robe of a material that I could not identify. The drummer wore a sash round his waist and loins, and a turban on his head decorated with a pearl roughly set in a metal that looked like dull silver. He was tatooed on the breast with the design of a bird, and he wore an armlet made of stringed stones and shells.

The Bulonagans set up a great shout. The king of the Kututus (for the whistler was no less a personage) waved his hand. His followers halted. He went forward and greeted a person whom I had not yet seen, and whom I afterwards learned was the chief of the island, to whom Lofulu was betrothed. He was a young full-blooded savage, quite naked, with the exception of a gorgeous sash wound about his loins and a band of curious texture about his head.

He advanced towards the gaily attired King of Kututu, raising his spear as if to strike him, and just as quickly breaking it across his knee and laying it down for the Kututu king and his followers to walk over; this being the outward form and sign of the Bulonagan submission to Kututu, an adjacent island kingdom to which the Bulonagans paid tribute.

"It is part of my privilege as king of Kututu," said the monarch of the whistle with a strong Irish accent, "to convarse with any Bulonagan captives that may be cognisant of the English language; but it is against the traties which bind these blackguards to me to connive at their escape."

I have heard persons in Scarsdale, when I was a boy, say in regard to the influence of some special surprise that you might have knocked them down with a feather. I realised what they meant the moment the Kututu king began to speak. A sudden faintness seized me; I staggered and should have fallen but for the rough assistance of

my guard; whereupon the king addressed himself, in the native language, to his vassal of Bulonagan, after which he turned to me and said:

"The blackguard sdeclare it's your own fault; you won't eat, they say, and it is against the laws of your position, at this moment, that they can give you anything to drink but water."

Before I could answer him he was once more addressing the Bulonagan chief.

"He says he knows nothing of you; that you are the women's prize. And, bi jabers, you ought to be proud of that, the swate cratures that they are!"

He chucked Lofulu under the chin as familiarly as if she had been a Kilkenny bog-trotter.

"Ah, my lad," he said, turning to me, "if I were to do that, once she is his wife, one of us would be a corpse before the day's over. It's a different thing in ould Ireland, God rest it! Out here you mayn't as much as take a squint at a man's wife

but you may take a maiden on your knee even if she's betrothed and a chief's daughter."

He spoke to me as if we were old friends and as though there was nothing at all singular in our meeting.

"Ah, mi boy, it's a pity you didn't come ashore with a penny whistle and a six-shooter, an' then you might have annexed the blackguards, and we could have been royal neighbours, and had our political troubles, and an occasional war mayhap. Ah, the pity of it! I heard of your landing, and so stepped round to palaver. They've had you up at the chapel and shown you the craniums and things; I see they have by that same token round your neck. Don't spake, and don't hope; you are a doomed man! You should have stepped out with the left foot, and then they would have kept the condemned necklace for the next gossoon; they mean to roast you; to-morrow they will show you the oven; to-night I'll act as your father confessor, and maybe put you up

to a wrinkle. It's a privilege I enforced in my traty to help the captive of the club and the knife, if he be a white, to find his way, after death, to the white man's heaven."

"Anyhow," I said, "it will be a comfort to shake a fellow-countryman's hand at the last and say good-bye in English."

"Ah, by St. Patrick, and there's the throuble; you're no fellow countryman o' mine; divle a bit would I be here at all if it had not been for the persecution of the Saxon, bad luck to the lot o' ye! It's music to hear the old language for all that, and as a king it's the laste I can do to say a kind word to a fellow-crature who spakes it before he starts on his long journey."

"Thrue for you, Pat, mi boy!" I answered, with an effort at bravado which I did not feel.

"Ah, git out, don't think to come that over me, ye Saxon dog in a Norman skin! Just see the black divles skip to my whistle, notice the revolver that's sticking in my girdle, and then feel surprised if ye dare at

the shipwrecked mate of the *Lily of Killarney* being king of Kututu, outside the confines of civilisation, with a harem as numerous as the Grand Thurk and an army of cut-throats akewal to the throops of a Sultan of Agypt."

"I'm not surprised at anything a bold Irish boy accomplishes," I said; "but I am mightily ashamed to meet a real Irish king without being free to do him honour."

"Ah, git out with your blarny, and I shouldn't wonder if your mother was an Irishman," said his majesty.

"No, but my father was a French woman," I said, in a mock tone of banter and defiance.

"And ye look it!" he replied.

"Let the fact make us friends, and give me the means to get out of the infernal scrape you find me in," I said.

"I am now just about to send you back haughtily as if rejecting your appale, and I shall point to the sky where the whites believe they go to when they are dead, and I shall then take up that little weapon which

hangs to the beads round your neck and turn it the other way, which means that I cannot interfere with the decrees of the god of the Bulonagans; but we will meet again at night, when these blackguards dare not leave their fires for fear of the Evil One, and it's myself will help you if possible; if you had the pluck of Ould Ireland in your veins mayhap I could; but oblige me by only expecting the worst."

"Which is the way to achieve the best," I said; "though I'm not particularly wedded to life, I don't want to die here, and I would like to be buried decently."

"You'll not be buried at all if ye die here," he answered; "only think of the bliss of being eaten by Lofulu! But now to cast you off! Just watch how plased the blackguards will be!"

He thereupon uttered a series of threats waving me aside and telling me not to mind what he said. Then he took up the miniature fork, the pendant to the barbaric necklace, and reversed it. The Bulonagans

shouted a wild approval of what he had done. I fell back as if overcome, at which the king, winking his approval, took out his revolver and fired three shots into the air; then putting his whistle to his lips he blew out right lustily the melody of "Garry Owen," and the Bulonagans and Kututus moved forward together.

CHAPTER VII.

STRANGE ISLANDS OF THE SEA.

Following with my guard (who now that my condemnation had, as it were, been officially endorsed by the Suzerain of the island, exercised an increased vigilance over me) I could only marvel at the picture of this Irish gentleman with his whistle, his revolver, his harem, his army, and his sovereignty. I congratulated myself very much on the encounter, though the king was sincere in impressing upon me the extreme peril of my position.

I ought not to have been particularly surprised at finding a fellow-countryman in

a position of authority in this out-of-the-way and unknown land; for it is well known that white men are consorting with savages in many countries, adopting their habits, and living their lives.

Dr. Carver, "the great American shooter," was "an Indian brave." He told me the story of his life. When he was a child he was captured by the Indians, his parents murdered, and he preserved, to finally eclipse them as hunter, trapper, and rifle-shot.

Captain John Smith, the well-known Melbourne merchant, gave me an account of his life on one of the Fiji islands, where (the survivor of four English sailors who were wrecked there and not eaten) he spent ten years, during which time not a single opportunity offered of his getting away. "We never once saw a ship within hail," he said; "and at last I became so used to the life that I ceased to care about rescue." He showed me the island on the map. It is one of those nearest Brisbane,

and I think he called it Turgan. "We were part of the crew of *The Bulldog* from Liverpool," he said, "and we expected to be murdered right off; but we had a couple of pistols and a little dry ammunition between us, and we let the firearms off and then gave one of them to the chief of the party to whom we surrendered, and somehow we got along all right. Two of my mates died on the island, a third disappeared, and, when at last an English man-of-war sent her long-boat off for water, I was half reluctant to embrace the opportunity of escape. They were bound for Melbourne, the port my ship sailed for ten years previously, and I concluded to take the opportunity of finishing my voyage. I have done well since, chiefly through trading with Fiji."

An even better known merchant than Captain John Smith, a London and Australian trader, named Levett, once gave me a description of rescuing an entire English family, who had been cast ashore on an uninhabited island, after living there

seven years without once seeing a sail. "There are many similar cases," he said; "and as for Englishmen living among savages, they are not less numerous." I suggested to him that it would be a humane thing for the Government to send out a fleet of exploring ships to release the Juan Fernandezes and Robinson Crusoes of the distant seas, and bring them home to their families. Levett is a very prosaic and business-like man. He said their return, in some cases, might be very inconvenient.

It is well known by travellers and students of history, that at the beginning of the present century many convicts escaped from New South Wales, and settled in the islands of Fiji. In Mr. James Calvert's records of missionary labours among cannibals, and Mr. Thomas Williams's account of Fiji and the Fijians, edited by George Stringer Rowe, it is stated that most of these escaped desperadoes lived either at Urban or Rewa, "the chiefs of which allowed them whatever they chose to demand, receiving in return their

aid in carrying on war." The new comers had firearms, the use of which obtained for them that god-like distinction which led to their obtaining authority and power. "Some of them were men of most desperate wickedness, being regarded as monsters even by the ferocious cannibals with whom they associated. These lawless men were twenty-seven in number on their arrival in 1804; but in a few years the greater part had ended their career, having fallen in the native wars, or in deadly quarrels among themselves. A Swede, named Savage, who had some redeeming traits in his character, and was acknowledged as head man by the whites, was drowned and eaten by the natives at Weila in 1813. In 1824 only two, and in 1840 but one, of his companions survived. This last was an Irishman named Connor, who stood in the same relation to the King of Rewa as Savage had done to His Majesty of Urban. His influence among the natives was so great that all his desires, some of which were of the most inhuman kind, were grati-

fied. The King of Rewa would always avenge, and often in the most cruel manner, the real or fancied wrongs of this man. If he desired the death of any native, the chief would send for the doomed man, and direct him to make and heat an oven, into which, when red-hot, the victim was cast, having been murdered by another man set for the purpose. Soon after the death of his patron, Paddy Connor left Rewa; but he was even in his latest years so badly tainted with Fijianism that he was shunned by all classes, and he spent his last days, it is said, in "rearing pigs and fowls, and increasing the number of his children from forty-eight to fifty." The editor of these records (published by the eminently respectable firm of Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton) intimates that he has been compelled to omit some passages of the Fijian history, which are, I presume, either too horrible or too immoral for publication; and I can quite sympathise with the conscientious editor in question; for, in some respects, the Bulonagans are quite as unsophisticated

(to use a mild term) in their manners and customs as certain of the Fijian peoples; but, fortunately, the Irishman, who by his wit and courage had conquered the island of Kututu and made it his own, developed in his dealings with me all the best traits of the Irish character; and I am bound to say for him, that in the administration of his government of Kututu he put into practice many of those highly liberal and fraternal sentiments of equality that characterise the interesting, but somewhat impracticable, platform of Mr. George, the socialistic philosopher, and the Parnell and Dillon school of so-called politicians.

The government of Kututu was, nevertheless, eminently paternal, and strikingly despotic; but that was a necessity of the country. You might be ever so wise at Kututu, but if you could not fight, if you did not always slay your enemy, if the gods were not always on your side, if you did not enforce even your most generous measures with physical austerity, then your

wisdom was not worth a yard of cloth. So my friend the king informed me. I say my friend advisedly, and with gratitude; for he saved my life at the peril of his own, and at the risk of the revolt of his vassal of Bulonagan, over whom he had established the suzerainty of Kututu after a long, bitter, and devastating warfare.

I have no map by me, which I can consult, on the large scale recommended by Lord Salisbury to certain politicians in regard to Central Asia. At the moment, I can only indeed refer to the small outline chart, printed by Mr. Stanford for the British North Borneo Company, to illustrate a work entitled "The New Ceylon," and to a not much larger map of the *Compagnie des Messageries Maritimes*, showing their route from Marseilles to Singapore and Java. Antwerp has plenty of maps, I dare say, but these are all I find at the hotel (I am still writing within the shadow of the lace tower), and if you look at them or at any other charts you will note in the Pacific Ocean, close upon

the equator, a cluster of nameless islands off New Guinea and the Torres Straits. Three of these are the Bulonagan group; and one of the larger, further to the north, is Kututu.

When you glance at the routes of the great ocean steamers you will easily understand the possibilities of the situation which I have described. If you want further evidence take into account the current experience of travellers even within the circle of European authorities, English, Dutch, and Spanish. Glance, for example, on the larger chart, at the islands north of Borneo. Several of these have never been explored, near as they appear to be to British territory. For that matter Borneo itself is in some parts a *terra incognita*. It is only within the past few months that a young friend of mine has conducted an expedition through territory of the nineteenth-century East India Company, where a white man had never been seen until the natives looked on this new comer, with his scientific instru-

ments and his Winchester rifle, which you may be sure astonished them very much. The truth is, in the Malay archipelago, the China and Indian Oceans, the Java Sea, and the Great Pacific Ocean, the rarity is not so much the islands that are unknown as those that are known, not the existence of utterly barbaric and savage countries, but the existence of civilisation. Taking Borneo still as an example in point, though it is divided between the governments of Holland, Rajah Brooke, and a great English Company, no more remarkable example of the unexplored character of the country can well be mentioned than the fact that one of its finest harbours has only quite recently been discovered. Commodore Johnstone, of H.M.S. *Egeria*, sent home the earliest notification of the existence of Kudat in August, 1881, and it now appears for the first time on the Admiralty chart. The governor of the new territory visited it on the 25th of August in the Company's launch *Enterprise*, and it has been decided to establish a residency in

Marudu Bay, overlooking the newly-discovered harbour.

In regard to the extent of the islands, many of which may be said to be lying about neglected, the haunts of a devastating barbarism, take only the Malay archipelago, spoken of by a great geological authority as "the fragments of two continents." These scattered islands represent "an absolute extent of land" little less than that of Western Europe from Hungary to Spain. The archipelago itself is over 4,000 miles in length from east to west, and is about 1,300 in breadth from north to south. "It includes three islands larger than Great Britain; and in one of them, Borneo, the whole of the British Isles might be set down, and would be surrounded by a sea of forests. New Guinea, though less compact in shape, is probably larger than Borneo. Sumatra is about equal in extent to Great Britain. Java, Luzon, and Celebes are each about the size of Ireland. Eighteen more islands are on the average as large as Jamaica;

more than a hundred are as large as the Isle of Wight; while the isles and islets of smaller size are innumerable." It is in these regions that eventually the Chinese must find an outlet for their labour. The progress of civilisation cannot continue to pass by these "islands of the sun" in the coming years; and, when the historian, a century hence, takes up his pen to tell the history of the exploration and cultivation of the archipelago, the society of English travellers and merchants who supplemented native labour with a systematic endowment of Chinese industry and ingenuity, will, it is believed, furnish a chapter of important and valuable results. There is more than one Eastern Question, and that which is developing rapidly to-day, with the raising of the floodgates of Chinese emigration, is not the least important of the problems, Asiatic and Oriental, which will have to be solved by future statesmen.

In that slowly advancing future it is to be hoped that the services which the Irish

king of Kututu has rendered to civilisation may have borne good fruit; for, failing to raise up a successor who might carry on the government on his own enlightened and liberal lines, he has commissioned me to make overtures for its annexation to the British Government. With all their faults, he concludes that the English rulers are a better set than the Spanish or the Dutch, and the choice of masters over these far-away countries lies between these three. He thinks the protection of the British flag would lead to a development of the country, the capacity of which for the exportation of tropical produce is very great; and, though he has only been in power for ten years, he claims to have laid the foundation for an order of civilisation not inferior to some of Great Britain's existing possessions. As for the Bulonagans, he despairs of effecting much change in their condition in the absence of European residents. "I am the only white face in this world of Kututu and Bulonagan," he said, patheti-

cally, "and, with a wife and six children somewhere in the old counthry, I would be willing to transfer my government to a civilised power, for I have possessions of pearls and other trinkets that would kape me for the rest of my days, and, bi jabers, there's gutta-percha enough in Kututu to rebuild the pyramids of Aygept twice over in ingia-rubber."

This is an example of the conversation I held with the king on the night of his for me (and I hope for him) most fortunate visit to the principal island of the Bulonagans.

Both the Kututuans and the Bulonagans are afraid in the dark. They never stir outside the light of their fires or primitive lamps. The jungle at night is sacred to spirits, good or evil. They will not interfere with anything that moves about in the dark. The king of the Kututus therefore selected the night time for his interview with me. The god of the whites, he told the Bulonagans, haunted the night partly to disguise the fact that his complexion was of the hue of

green leaves, and also because he was not willing that any one should look upon him. In the day-time he lived up in the clouds. At night he came down with the darkness. He was very small but very swift and peculiarly quick of hearing. When any of his people wished to enter his country as this white captive of theirs did now, he could hear him in the dark if he was ever so far away. The chief ventured to doubt how the white man, whom Lofulu and her friends were going to eat, could, after that, enter the white man's heaven. He smiled incredulously when the king told him the white man's god could make him over again, and that the white man did not care to take his body to heaven but only his spirit, which neither their knives nor their ovens could hurt. The chief said it might be so. Anyhow, neither Lofulu nor her women, nor their god, would raise any objection to the desire of the great and mighty king of Kututu, possessor of the fiery thunder that kills (alluding to his re-

volver), that he should accompany the white slave to commune with his little god in the jungle.

In this way I had a long aud interesting conversation with my Irish friend, who explained to me an ingenious plan whereby I might escape the death to which the Bulonagans had doomed me.

CHAPTER VIII.

A LESSON IN DIPLOMACY AND STRATEGY, AND ITS MARVELLOUS RESULTS.

"D'ye mind the noise?" he said, "it's not spirits; if you know the tropics at all it will not startle ye."

"I do not know the tropics," I said. "Ah, you'll soon get over that; when the sun's down all the queer divles of animals, bow-legged bears, elephants, snakes, and a whole crowd of them go to business; they work at night; I suppose they know the natives are afraid to come out and spear them in the dark."

"Are there snakes?" I asked.

"Are there snakes!" he exclaimed, "as long as Sackville Street in Dublin, and as thick round as that imp of the world Datutong."

While he spoke he produced a small lantern, and lighted it with a match.

"Let us see where we are, and then we'll make a fire."

"A lantern!" I exclaimed.

"And why not? We had three weeks to collect the remains of the poor old *Lily of Killarney* after the wreck, and my advantage is that I know how to use some of them."

"But matches!" I said.

"Bi jabers and the matches are home-made! It's the greatest triumph of my reign. I make them miself. A lot came ashore, and the stores of the laboratory, as the docther called his shop, and he was a chemist learned in the art of the divle knows what in the way of gunpowder and salt-pater, and brimstone and the like. Ah! don't bother me about such trifles, come to Kututu and just see for yourself."

"I only wish I could. Don't mock me, my friend!"

"Mock ye! divle a bit! Lend a hand here."

I assisted him to throw together some wood and leaves, and presently we were sitting in the light of a fire, at a spot which was partially cleared.

"You are the third victim that has sat here with me; may be I'll save ye from the oven. I never saved them poor cratures. Third time pays for all. You are the lucky number. These people are under the influence of all manner of signs and omens. They have had captives who have not been condemned to the oven and some that have escaped, and they owe their salvation, poor divles, to doing things they never thought of, just as the others owe their roasting to doing things equally unbeknown to themselves. I complated my eddication in these matters only quite racent. D'ye mind they watched ye all night? Well, it was to note which side ye turned yer head wheniver ye walked,

and on that dipended your life. Now listen to me!"

"I am listening with all my ears," I said.

"The day afther to-morrow you are to be convarted into roast-man—don't shudder like that – if I don't succeed in getting ye off, and I mane trying. But it must be done by stratagem. The Bulonagan god is left-handed. D'ye know why?"

"No!"

"Becase he is one-handed; he lost his right in a battle with all the other gods, upon which occasion Tonggollander, the deity of Fojei, chopped the Bulonagan god's right arm off. It was a great fight. Tonggollander ate the other's arm, but the other ate Tonggollander, and so got even. Are ye minding me?"

"Indeed I am."

"Then d'ye note that the Bulonagans take all left-handed signs as paying tribute to their god, Bangonigan. Every inclination or movement to the left made uncon-

sciously by man, or beast, or bird, is taken for a sign of Bangonigan's favour. If you had stepped out with your right foot at their sacred ating-house your death would have been postponed, and supposing that sign had been repated on three occasions you would have saved yourself. And if, when they watched you beforehand, you had turned your head to the left, lain on your left side, got up on the left, and inclined to the left on laving the house, then bi jabers you might never have been taken up to the palace of skulls at all, d'ye see! Do I make myself clear?"

"Yes, most clear."

"Very well then, lay all I've said to heart. Be left-handid from this minnit, left-legged, left-headed. If ye're as clever as I take ye for ye may end in being looked upon as Bangonigan's particular friend, and in that case there's no knowing what honour may not be in store for ye."

"But supposing this left-handed policy is of no avail?"

"Ah, bad luck to such suppositions! When ye've seen as much of savage life as I have ye'll know that an omen is stronger than an army. Anyhow rely on me to stay by ye until I see the stratagem through. Aren't you satisfied?"

"A good six-shooter would make me content," I said.

"Ah, nonsense, it would only get you into worse trouble. Be left-handid my boy from now till the day after to-morrow, and I'll lay odds you may make arrangements to go with me to Kututu. Once there you are safe aniway so long as I am king of that once cannibal island. Okey pokey winkey fum, how d'ye like your praties done, dipped in fat and rolled in rum, the King of the Cannibal Islands! Ah, bi jabers, when first I assumed the royal purple, that favourite song of an old shipmate of mine, how it rang in my ears! It's a quare world entirely, and that's a fact, so it is. And just in mimry of happier days we'll say a quiet prayer and sneak back to the village."

My strange companion bent his head, crossed himself, and was silent for some minutes. I followed his example and humbly commended myself to heaven. All the forest was busy with life. Wild animals were making their way along an adjacent track to the river. A thick dew filled the atmosphere. We were in a bath of vapour.

"Divle a one of the dusky blackguards would dare to be out here in the dark," said the king, as he turned the light upon me. "Come, we'll get back, that is if the bastes and sarpints don't make males of us!"

I moved forward to comply with his bidding, whereupon he shrieked, "Ah! the divle fly away wid ye, what are ye doing?"

"Nothing," I answered in alarm.

"By St. Patrick and all the thaving hathen gods combined I've a mind to give ye up and let ye roast!"

"What have I done?" I asked.

"Is it what have ye done? What have ye not done? Where's your leg? Look at it as ye stand this minnit."

He flung the light full upon me.

"There ye are like a candidate for all the ovens in Bulonagan with your right leg first and your right arm at attention. Upon my soul ye'd vex St. Patrick himself!"

If the people whom Mr. Charles Reade addressed in England and America, upon the importance of training the left hand as well as the right, had only had such strong inducement for following his advice as I had to act upon that given to me by the Irish king, the supremacy of the Anglo-American right hand would indeed have been in danger of dethronement. My Irish friend had no cause to give me a second hint. With the double prospect of death and release I found myself anxious to live, and with a desire to live came a wish to see Kututu and the white king at home.

There was something like consternation among the Bulonagans the next day when I developed a tendency to do everything in a left-handed, left-legged, left-headed way.

Among less superstitious people the

king of Kututu might have been suspected of aiding and abetting a prisoner to escape the fate of the oven. But in all things these savages preferred to be guided rather by signs and omens than by common sense. Moreover they had no reason to think that the white monarch knew anything relating to the mysteries of their sacrifices; and the left-handed omen was a secret of their religion. They never betrayed it in their own persons. They used both hands with facility; they did not exalt the left over the right; they reserved manifestations of left-handedism to the captives who were dedicated to the oven; and they trusted results to the god, knowing that he was interested in the feast; for they always left dainty bits; in a wooden bowl, on the left of the god's rude effigy, which the chief priest dealt with according to a certain savage ritual that not even the king of Kututu could have explained.

The Bulonagans, as they are the most savage and barbarous of the savages known to the Eastern seas, are also the most super-

stitious. They anoint the headman or chief's house once a year with the blood of five victims. They believe the phosphorescent lights in the mangrove swamps are spirits seeking their way to the sacred lake, which is indeed the Bulonagan heaven. If a bird flies to the right of an expedition of war, plunder, or trade, they give up the business. On the other hand, if the birds which they meet go to the left, they prosecute their enterprise with a certainty of success. They believe a madman is possessed of an imp, and they promptly hunt lunatically disposed persons to death, as savagely as the Malays destroy a man under the influence of "amok."

The reader will easily therefore understand how my Caliban-like guard stared when the next morning (having been conducted to my quarters by the good king of the Kututus at midnight) he found me fast asleep ostentatiously on the left of my rough couch, with my left hand supporting my head, which was also inclined towards

the left. Presently, when half opening my eyes, I had duly noted his astonishment, I stepped upon the bamboo floor with my left foot. If the situation had not been serious, I should have laughed, and if I had laughed I should have done so as much as possible on the left side of my face. When I was a boy at Scarsdale I once heard Laudnum Nanny say she would make her grand-daughter laugh on the other side of her face. What odd things occur to one in difficulties! Perhaps old Mother Lingard had, in her dealings with the witchworld, heard of some superstition akin to that of Bulonagan, I thought. I took my food with my left hand, and when the bathing hour came I plunged into the lake on my left side, at which Lofulu and her women maintained a dead silence. Returning to the village I found an assemblage of the chief, the ex-chief, and many others awaiting me. King Kututu and his staff were with them. The chief signalled me to approach. I did so boldly and with an air of defiance, stepping

out with my left foot and dragging my right as if it were partially paralysed. Arrived at the spot where they were seated upon a large mat, I bowed to the company and then suddenly, as if impelled by a power over which I had no control, I turned in the direction where I believed the sanguinary temple of Bangonigan to lie, and, raising my left hand, I bowed to the earth.

At this all the Bulonagans suddenly rose, and raising their left arms uttered an unearthly yell, after which they squatted upon their mats and began to talk to each other, every one speaking at once. Presently, turning to my Irish friend, the chief addressed to him a series of questions about me.

"You are to sit down on the edge of the chief's mat," said the king, "and don't overdo it, mi boy!"

I sat, making a point of doing it with a view to emphasise the superior influence of my left side over my right.

The chief turned and spoke to the king.

"You're divlish clever, 'pon my soul, and I'd give away the finest lady in the Kututu harem to laugh. The chief wants to know why ye turned to the left, looked towards the forest, and then raised your left hand."

"Tell him," I said, "if you approve of the answer, that I saw the vision of a great chief who had only one arm, that I humbly offered him mine, and that he shook his head and said in my own language, 'Go to your own country and tell them you have seen the great Bangonigan.'"

The king spoke to the chief in what appeared to me to be a style of mock-solemnity. His words were received with a dead silence. Then the chief beckoned me to rise, and made room for me to sit by his side. In doing so I acknowledged his condescension by placing my left hand upon my heart, and bowing my head.

Then the chief spoke again to the king, who pretended to be in great awe of me.

"They want to know what the great

chief is like. Now they'll have ye, mi friend, if you don't mind your eye!"

"Tell them," I said, rising and looking in the direction of the temple once more, "that in face and features he is like the chief whom I see before me, only taller and stronger; that he is beautiful as Lofulu in the eyes, but broader in build than any man I have ever seen, and that I once lived among the giants of Timbuctoo!"

While making this reply I imitated the action of a pantomimist I had seen at La Scala, stroking my face and limbs, and generally illustrating my words with approved stage gesture; but always with my left hand.

As soon as the king had translated my words, the company rose once more, raised their left arms and yelled; after which the chief spoke to my fierce guard, who rushed away to re-appear with a very primitive half-baked earthen bowl of liquor and a number of pipes made of bamboo. He presented the bowl to the chief, who drank and

handed it to me, as ceremoniously as a Lord Mayor might to his chief guest at the Mansion House. I put out my left hand and then my right, and taking the bowl drank a burning decoction not unlike methylated spirits flavoured with rum. I handed the bowl back. The chief drained its contents and then broke it, whereupon the company got upon their legs and danced a wild measure around me. This demonstration concluded, the chief spoke again to the king, who, turning to me, said,

"We've bate 'em just as clane as paling praties! I am to inform you that you are now one of them—the blackguards!—that you are a brother, with the right to come and go as you plase, but they advise you to go to your own country as the great chief told you, and when you have said to your own people what he said ye can come back again, but not in a ship; what they mane by that same I don't know, but you're a lucky gossoon, and that's all I can say about it."

"My dear friend," I said, "I thank you

for my life, and if ever I can give you practical proof of my gratitude it will be a real happiness to do it."

"Ah, bi jabers, don't mention it! Come on a visit to me and then we'll arrange that little matther of annexation I told ye of, and I'll give ye a hat-full of pearls and precious stones to pay your expenses. I'll just tell them you'll be off at once, but that you will come back if they wish it with presents for the chief and Lofulu, and a message from your own counthry to their great and powerful god-chief Bangonigan."

From that moment all was bustle and excitement in the Bulonagan village. "At once" was literally interpreted. My Irish friend had solicited permission to escort me as far as Kututu, and fit me out there with a boat that should intercept some great ship at sea. The chief had acquiesced. King Kututu gave orders for his officers and companions, his armed men and sailors, to prepare for instant departure.

By sundown we were encamped on the

shore, ready to start with daylight the next morning. I recall the leap of delight my heart gave when I found myself once more by the sea, with its thousand unseen paths that might lead me back to civilisation.

In the still watches of the night I listened to the music of the waters, I looked up at the stars, and I thanked God for my release from a death worse than that which my unhappy comrades had met on the very beach where I was resting. I wondered whether Judith Travers might be thinking of me; and in the same vague way thought of Helen Dunstan and the Worcestershire valley.

I must have gone to sleep with the dear old squire on wheels, his amiable daughter, and my Uncle Grantley in my mind; for when I awoke I was dreaming that I was walking through a sweet-smelling Breedon hay-field, with Helen Dunstan, to join her father and my uncle. They were waiting for us at the field-gate, which gave upon a lane down which they had driven to take us up to the manor-house. It was odd

that I should have mixed up, even in a dream, the perfume of new-mown hay with Helen Dunstan; for in my waking moments the newly-cut grass of summer days was associated with my romance of Calypso's island—I mean the never-to-be-forgotten Villa Verona.

But why should fate or fortune beguile me with dreams belonging to a land I might never see again?—and with a sweet English valley from the scents and perfumes and restful joys of which I had long since been excommunicated?

CHAPTER IX.

FROM DREAMLAND TO REALITY.

I was awakened by a strange unearthly noise. The first suggestion of daylight was in the sky. It was nearly morning.

Shouting, yelling, screaming, and the clash of arms. There was a battle going on all round about me; I was sure of it.

Suddenly I was seized and dragged towards the water. I struggled and fought, but was overcome. My assailants were Bulonagans, and I recognised the chief as he quickly bound me with rattan. I was flung into a boat, into which several persons leaped, and in a few moments we were making our way out to sea.

The fighting ashore went on. I might have doubted the serious character of the commotion if I had not heard the explosion of pistols. The Irish king was assuredly at work. Crack, crack, crack, went his revolvers! I counted eight shots. They were deliberately fired. I can well believe that for each explosion there fell an enemy dead.

The boat sped on at a rapid rate. I lay bound in the stern. I raised myself sufficiently to look over the side. The daylight was growing. I could see shadowy forms moving about on shore. I was certain that I recognised my kind-hearted Irish friend. He was striding up and down near the edge of the water. Several boats were being launched. I could see figures lying prone on the sand. They were the dead and wounded. It was plain to see that there had been a fight, and that the Kututus had been victorious. They had evidently been treacherously surprised and attacked, and I was no doubt the cause. Possibly they were jealous of my departure with the king. They may

have thought that he would barter me, for knives and looking-glasses and tobacco, with some passing ship, and thus rob them of their booty. Or the one-armed god may have inspired them to resent the intrusion of the king upon his command that I should go to my own country. Lofulu may have had a vision, or the priest may have sent them a message of war. Any guess in this direction might be as correct as another. The only safe conclusion I could come to was that the Kututu party had been suddenly attacked; that in the disturbance I had been carried off (for what object I could not at first imagine); that after a severe struggle the king had succeeded in bringing his two revolvers into action; and that finally His Majesty's forces had triumphed.

In a little while I noticed that three boats were setting out in pursuit of us. The great canoe or prahu fairly leaped, to the new motion of the paddles, as the Bulonagans made this discovery. The chief said something to the men. They gave a grunt of

recognition, and for nearly an hour they never relaxed in their work. We sped along, at racing pace, as the morning broke in gorgeous colours upon the sea. On we went, dancing over the clear waters. I looked down. I could see the golden sands below. It would have seemed as if we were passing through the air but for the occasional splash of the oars or paddles.

The three pursuing boats came on, at first with speed, but they never gained upon us. After an hour the chief gave the word to rest.

Bulonagan is rich in fruits and vegetables. My captors had stored their boat with supplies. Rations of oranges, custard-apples, and rice were served out. I was unbound and invited to eat. The chief desired me by signs to have no fear. He raised his left arm and then touched me with his left hand in the region of my heart. Then taking, from the folds of his sarong, a large knife he shook it threateningly in the direction of the pursuing boats.

CHAPTER X.

IN WHICH I HAVE SOME PLEASANT EXPERIENCES AFLOAT AND ASHORE.

Presently a stiff breeze sprang up. The prahu was speedily under sail. She tore along before the wind. The three boats astern of us were now the merest dots upon the sea. The chief shaded his eyes and watched them. They grew smaller and smaller. Towards sunset they disappeared altogether.

The sun dropped away, like a red globe, into the sea, and with it the breeze. Sails were hauled down, and the boat was left to drift. A pale moon appeared among a few scattered stars. I thought of Italy and

Judith. A luminous glow spread over the waters. Myriads of *medusæ* discharged their phosphorescent light upon the swelling tide.

My captors gave me rice, mixed with a curious confection, cocoa-nut milk, and fruit. One-half the crew lay down and slept. The others sat and watched. The chief smoked a rough kind of tobacco, folded up in a leaf. He came and sat near me in the stern of the boat, and offered me a whiff of his primitive cigar. I declined it, at which he seemed sad. He expressed, by signs, great friendship for me, and more than once touched me gently on my left shoulder.

After a time I slept with the resting crew, and when I awoke it was morning again. We were now fairly at sea in our frail boat; and, from the careful "look-out" that was maintained by the chief himself, I concluded that the object was to sight some vessel and give me up. I little thought that my poor friend the carpenter of *The Phœbe* had been thus restored to his own country.

It is not necessary that I should dwell

upon this incident of my escape from "the man-eaters of Bulonagan." We were tossed about nearly all day, the natives working their sails to catch whatever wind there was, and sending their tiny craft along with a fearlessness and skill that I could not but admire. They had neither rudder nor compass. The native nearest the stern steered the boat with his powerful paddle. The chief commanded it. At night he took careful note of the stars. In the daytime he made careful observations of the sun.

In the afternoon of the second day we sighted a vessel. It turned out to be a steam yacht belonging to His Exquisite Majesty Kimona, Sultan of Sooloo. At first my dusky companions were chagrined at this, and would have put about and left her, only that the yacht fired a gun across our bows as a signal that we were to be overhauled. The yacht, it turned out, had been on active service, against pirates who infest these seas. The captain was a Spaniard in high favour with the Sultan. He received me

with great politeness. The Bulonagans did not wish to go on board. The captain intimated that the chief must do so. Instead of giving him any presents, he took him aft and showed him four recently captured pirates in chains. The Bulonagan gazed at them without the slightest change of countenance. Nor did he betray any feeling of alarm when, through an interpreter (whom the captain addressed in French), he was informed that the Spanish chief had a great mind to send him, in their company, to be hanged. I pleaded for him and his crew, though I confess they did not deserve it. I only owed my escape to their superstitious fears and avarice, and I might have denounced them as the murderers of the crew of *The Phoebe*. I did not do so. On the contrary, I begged that they might be well treated, and even rewarded. The captain was good enough to comply with my wishes. The Bulonagans were invited on board. After a little hesitation they made their boats fast and climbed up the chains. They produced several pearls and stones (not

unlike diamonds in the rough), which the captain and several officers, military and naval, examined, and finally pocketed. In return they gave the natives knives, empty meat-tins, a few yards of cloth, some Birmingham beads, a looking-glass, a quantity of brass wire, and, what the chief evidently prized the most, a great roll of tobacco and a pipe. The intercourse only lasted about half an hour. The Bulonagans then slipped down the sides of the yacht into their boat, the yacht put on steam, and so the two vessels parted.

It is like a dream of sunshine, with demons in it, this experience of the eastern seas; for, in spite of the horrors which encompassed me there, afloat and ashore, the luxurious beauty of the tropical world, pulsating in the sun, comes up in my memory, as if to neutralise the sanguinary reminiscences that are unfortunately part of it. How strange it seems that Providence should have peopled these "paradises on earth," that stud the broad ocean near the equator, with men and women no better than

the beasts, either in their desires or passions. There are of course many exceptions to this condition of things, and I do not for one moment desire to imply utter barbarism as characteristic of the enlightened people of Sooloo, Brunei, nor even in regard to the modern Fijians, Malays, or Dyaks, though certain of the latter tribes are addicted to head-hunting. The Kututuans are a higher type of savage than the Bulonagans, and should their Irish king live long enough he may even bring them into a state of civilisation worthy at least of the coast-people of Brunei and Sooloo. He found them cannibals, though not lovers of human flesh as the Bulonagans are. Kututu only ate its conquered enemies, not so much in the way of epicurean relish as by way of dishonouring the slaughtered foe. The Bulonagans eat human flesh to this day because they like it.

I was astonished that the captain of the Sultan's yacht had not heard either of Kututu or Bulonagan, but he explained to me that there are scores of islands in these

seas which have never been visited by Europeans; that many of them are unnamed; and that occasionally a stray weather-beaten ship discovers, to its cost, that there are important islands not even indicated upon the charts. One of his officers who had recently visited Fiji, by way of illustrating the captain's remark, reminded me that this group numbers 255 islands, of which at present, even with the encouragement of the English flag flying at Vitileva, the leading settlement, only 80 are inhabited, leaving 165 islands of that group alone unaccounted for. It was not, as I imagined then, at all surprising that the captain should not have heard of Kututu or Bulonagan; but he was quite prepared to hear that the natives from whom I had escaped were man-eaters, seeing that even in Dutch Borneo there are a low-class Dyak tribe known as the Trings, who eat people. This is borne out by the narrative of Mr. Carl Bock, an explorer of the Dutch territory in Borneo, who has recently written a book

upon the subject. He drew the likeness of a villainous-looking chief of the Tring Dyaks, Siban Mobang, who at the very time he sat for his portrait "had fresh upon his head the blood of no less than seventy victims, men, women, and children, whom he and his followers had just slaughtered, and whose hands and brains he had eaten." I am bound to confess that, although the Bulonagans were epicures in the way of human flesh, they made no boast of it; and, from what His Majesty of Kututu told me, they conducted the business with a certain savage pomp that I should imagine was quite outside the vulgar brutality of the Tring Dyaks of Mr. Bock's narrative. I am half inclined to think that this Siban Mobang, finding Mr. Bock's curiosity about cannibalism very great, and his pleasure at meeting a regular out-and-out man-eater no less intense, boasted a little. Having sojourned for over three years in the tropical seas near the equator, I can say that the natives of all classes, from the most refined to the most

barbarous, are "liars of the deepest dye." They would make splendid diplomatists, for they are adepts at "the lie of circumstance," and the falsehood of suggestion is practised by all of them with the greatest success. A young friend of mine, when first he went into the business of exploring North Borneo for minerals, was occasionally led off the scent by the most astounding and circumstantial details in respect of vast deposits of antimony and gold. I remember his telling me, as we discussed a delicious curry in his comfortable quarters at Labuan, that near a place called Kuias he was induced to go out of his way a considerable distance by the Dusun (a mild and inoffensive tribe) native guides, who affirmed that there was gold in the bed of a stream running from a hill, which they could see some miles away. "When I got there," he said, "I was shown some scales and plates of mica, which were pointed out to me as gold. The bed of the stream is composed of thick black earthy matter, on the top of

which the mica was floating." This, however, he told me was one of the few instances where the natives who promised to lead him to the treasures of Borneo were even justified by anything like the merest basis for their reports of hills of antimony and mountains of gold. "It saved a good deal of time now and then," he said, "when the country into which they would have led me gave every geological indication that was opposed to their reports." I asked his opinion of the Carl Bock hero. "I can believe almost anything," he said, "of this wonderful and unexplored land. I have seen head-hunting going on even among what are called the harmless people of the north, and have slept at night under rows of their sanguinary trophies." We concluded that one day we would form an exploring expedition with a view to discover Kututu, not only to identify these islands with a view to carrying out the Irish king's wishes, but to "make a deal" for pearls and diamonds, my description of the rough stones

worn by the natives leading to the belief that they might be diamonds. "There is no reason why they should not be diamonds," he said; "seeing that Borneo has such a reputation for her diamonds it is quite on the cards that they may come from some other island, just as many of the Sooloo pearls are imported from Ceylon."

I shall ever remember the feeling of thankfulness, the new sense of security, that came over me when a steward of the Sultan's yacht showed me to a berth which the Spanish captain had allotted to me, together with linèn and other decent clothing which he had placed at my service. Among the linen were some elegant gossamer-like pyjamas. Having washed myself and dropped overboard the scanty garments with which Lofulu and her women had endowed me (for even when I was made "a brother of the chief" they did not return my clothing), I got into the pyjamas and climbed into my berth. A gentle breeze, caused chiefly by the motion of the vessel,

came in at the open port-hole, and I fell into a sleep that was profound. It was the first time I think I had laid down my head, without serious anxiety, for more than six months. I slept now for twenty-four hours without a dream. The captain had sent twice to inquire after me. When I awoke I pinched myself and felt at the pretty little state-room to assure myself that my escape from Bulonagan, and this part of it especially, was not a dream.

If all the Spaniards in the eastern seas were only like the captain of the Sultan's yacht, they would assuredly be more successful with the natives of Sooloo. As it is they hardly dare leave their forts, except in numbers and well armed. This captain was a gentleman in manners and habits, amiable and pleasant, and he confided to me that his compatriots, as a rule, deal far too harshly with the natives ever to make the Spanish government of them popular.

There is nothing more remarkable in recent days than the influence which a

mere handful of Englishmen have obtained over the natives of the adjacent district of North Borneo, wherever their government has reached them. I only speak now of the tribes within reasonable distance of the coast, not of the interior, where the fiercest still live in unexplored and unknown jungle. In several of the Dusan villages, for example, the natives are beginning to substitute pigs' heads and monkeys' crania for the old-fashioned human trophies of their forefathers. Mr. Pryer, a resident at Sandakan, in a private diary which I have before me, mentions several instances of advancement under the new Government.*

* Two days were spent here in visiting the chief, and taking in wood to replace the exhausted coal. On the 27th they steamed away again, passing many abandoned clearings, about which, Banjer, an old river man, spun many yarns. Here was one chief's place, there another's; at this point Dato So-and-so fought Pangeran Someone else; in a house over there had been big "bichara" between two chiefs; here the Sultan had a "Bintang marrow" station (a custom-house); down this long reach, for miles together, the Tunbumohas had houses and gardens on either bank, and so forth and so on. Banjer was a Sultan's man, and had once been put on a

I was most favourably impressed with the civilisation of the chief city of Sooloo, especially after the accounts the Spanish captain

" Bintang marrow " station. The man in charge of it thought the time had come to take a little duty in blood, just to let people see that the Sultan didn't keep " Bintang marrow " stations for nothing. So they caught a trader, accused him of evading the payment of duties, and, tying a rope round his wrists, fastened him to a post with his feet off the ground, and left him hanging there. He cried continually all day long: " I have committed no fault, I have committed no fault." They returned in the evening with their krises and hewed him to bits. Banjer went on to tell Mr. Pryer that he was present when the Tunbumohas " semungupped " a man who was a bought slave. The Tunbumohas tied him up with his arms outstretched (crucified in fact), and they danced round him. At last the headman approached, and wishing him a pleasant journey to Kina Balu, stuck his spear an inch deep, and no more, in the man's body; and another then said, " Bear my kind remembrances to my brother at Kina Balu," and did the same; and in this way, with messages to deceased relatives at Kina Balu, all those present slightly wounded the man. When the dance was over they unbound him, but he was dead. The custom is known as " semungup," and is practised by the far inland tribes to this day. The Tunbumohas, however, having an intuitive idea that the white men might not view such a custom with approval, have abandoned it so far that they substitute a pig for a man.—*A Trip on the Kinabatangan in* 1881.

had given me of the terrible outbreaks of the natives, which distracted both the Sultan and his Spanish representatives. The captain spoke of the Sultan as "the vassal of Spain," but nothing like vassalship was observable in the Sooloo court. The Spanish chiefs certainly treated the Sultan with all the deference that is demanded by royalty, particularly in eastern lands.

It was on the third day of my blissful journey on board the Sooloo yacht that we arrived off Meimbong. The country had a fertile and eminently civilised appearance. There were groves of fruit-trees on the hill-sides, and the flat-lands were not unlike Bulonagan so far as the foliage was concerned; but oh, the delicious change I found in well-built and pleasant houses, in security for life and limb, and in hearing my own language spoken! There was an English merchant in port, and I found him as liberal as he was learned and agreeable. I told him such parts of my story as I deemed necessary, and it was his own proposal that he should lend

me some money. "Draw upon Colonel Ernstone," he said, "or upon the owners of *The Phoebe*, for a hundred pounds, and I will give you the money in Singapore dollars, which you will find as useful here as sovereigns are in London. I will send the bill to my bankers at Singapore for collection, and I am sure it will be all right." He turned out to be an English trader, a merchant who visited these seas in his own vessel —a singularly trim and well-found steamer known as *The Pioneer*. It made a wide circuit of voyaging, running chiefly between Manilla, Meimbong, Sooloo, Labuan, Sarawak, Java, and Singapore. Jeffrey Waller was the merchant's name. He not only lent me money but gave me advice, which was worth more than gold. "The Sultan," he said, "hates the Spaniards in his heart, and likes the English; he speaks a little French and an equally little English; but he has an excellent interpreter, who is a friend of mine, and I will introduce you to him. You must not appear poor; take the Sultan a present; I

will arrange that, and it may be worth your while to stay in these latitudes for a year or two; there is no reason why you should not get up an expedition to Bulonagan or Kututu, or whatever you call your new discovery."

In due course I was presented at court. The Sultan was a superb-looking man, dressed in the oriental fashion, with a touch, I thought, of the Greek in his vest and jacket. He wore a turban and a sword with a beautifully jewelled handle. His officers were showily dressed. We sat on velvet chairs, ate Huntley and Palmer's biscuits, drank chocolate with brandy (Martell's three stars), and smoked manilla cigars. Do you wonder that I felt at home? I am not the first traveller who has experienced a thrill of delight at the sight of a Reading biscuit-tin, or a London pickle-jar, tokens of civilisation which are met with, now and then, in company with old copies of *The Illustrated London News* and *Punch* far away in the heart of savage lands, records of white visitors, sometimes relics of ship-

wreck, now and then trophies of massacres, such as that of my unfortunate shipmates of *The Phoebe*. Through the intervention of the interpreter, and partly, I hope, by my educated manners and bearing, I was more than royally received at the Sultan's court. His Majesty treated me with great generosity, and invited me to remain on a long visit. The Spanish captain fully maintained the character for courtliness and amiability which I had at first formed of him. The king assigned to me a special bungalow, and the captain gave me the run of his own establishment.

On the first night of my visit to the Sultan I had a similar experience to that of Mr. Burbidge a year or two later.*

* We retired to our room for the night; and then the Sultan's son, Datu Mahomed, and "Bottelah," the Sultan's secretary, together with two or three others, including "Gelah," came in for a chat, so that we did not get a chance of sleeping a wink until after two o'clock. Even when we were alone in our sleeping apartment, and had reclined just as we were in our clothes on the cushions and finely-worked mats spread out for us, I somehow felt conscious that we were watched; and once

This traveller is a well-known botanist. He made a nine months' tour in Borneo and Sooloo, and published quite recently an excellent book relating his experiences. I wish he could have seen Bulo-

I caught a glimpse of a dark figure gliding past a square opening in the wall above. Our room communicated with the audience chamber, which we had just left, by a window-like opening about two feet square. The lights in the large chamber had been extinguished, while we, as is customary in the East, had a glimmering oil-lamp in our room, so that any one in the audience chamber could see us plainly, without being themselves seen. We had no fear of treachery, and yet could not help feeling a creeping sensation of uneasiness as shadow after shadow passed the opening to the right of which we lay. At length a shadow lingering longer than usual, I sprang to my feet and put my head through the opening. A little suppressed scream, and the patter of bare feet on the platform on the other side, followed by muffled titters and whispering, told the tale. The ladies of the court, debarred by etiquette from seeing us publicly, had taken advantage of the darkness to obtain a peep at us. Barefooted, they had moved more silently than mice on the platform in the next room, and had satisfied their curiosity by stealing to the opening one after another, and looking down on us to their hearts' content. After this we got an hour or two of rest, and awoke at daybreak, when everybody was astir. We found our breakfast ready, and our ponies were saddled and at the door.—*Gardens of the Sun.*

nagan. The vegetation there was more extraordinary than I have seen it anywhere else in the world. There were orchids, in the forest, of gigantic proportions, some of them almost dwarfing the tree-trunks upon which they grew. The women made baths for their children out of the spathe of the local palm-tree, and the men mixed their "arrak," or whatever they called their intoxicating drink, with wine from the sago-palm, which they tapped, as I have seen the maple tapped in America. The weeping-tree (*Cæsalpinia pluviosa*) was common there, and there were pitcher-plants of every variety. Nowhere have I seen gutta in greater abundance; and the beauty of the tree-ferns, elk-horns, and giant mosses was beyond description. Among the flowers, besides the orchids with their wealth of colour, the creepers were singularly luxuriant, and notably the nepenthes or monkey-cups, which I often saw in clusters of a hundred together upon the ground with enormous pitchers, while others had climbed the trees as if to exhibit

their beauties to the sun. They were of many colours, purple, golden, red, some speckled, others showing radiant bars. Gardinias were common; and the flower-tree (*Poinsiana regia*) was in perfection; while in the rivers water-lilies of all kinds competed with the many lovely shore-loving plants. Bulonagan was indeed an earthly heaven peopled with fiends.

I remained at Meimbong (making frequent trips to adjacent islands) more than three years, during which time I received several letters from Colonel Ernstone. He had paid Mr. Jeffrey Waller's bill, and was anxious for an account of myself. He knew nothing of my nautical experiences, the Mr. Horris of the carpenter's narrative having quite shielded my identity. He told me that my uncle refused to have my name mentioned in his presence, at all events by Colonel Ernstone; that Mr. Justice Miller had married a rich widow; that Squire Dunstan was dead, leaving his

daughter all his property, and making her one of the richest women in England, and that she had "gone in strong" for philanthropy; that Lady Hallam and family were all well; and that he had met Father Gabriello, "strange to say, at Havre, on my way to a certain Normandy village, and we dined together and talked of Baveno and you and the Villa Verona."

Using the Colonel's own phrase, strange to say, the mention of the villa did not quicken my pulse. Analysing my feelings at this moment, I believe the death of the dear old Squire Dunstan, and the thought of his rich lovely daughter given over to philanthropy, stirred my feelings far more deeply than the recalling of my madly happy days in Italy. At the same time I am bound to admit that the quiet undemonstrative lazy life of Sooloo had toned down my sensations, my feelings, and my ambition. I loved to loll in the shade; the Sooloo girls were beautiful and merry; while

the *cuisine* of the Spanish bungalow and the calm gaieties and festivals of the Court were a perpetual delight.

I can imagine the reader asking how I got along as to money. I wanted none. The hundred pounds advanced to me by my Singapore friend was not half spent at the end of the first year, and during the second I had made money in various ways, but chiefly by small trading concessions granted to me by the Sultan. I had disbursed nothing except for presents, and these chiefly for sweets and confections for the ladies of the Court. Once or twice I had rendered the Manilla merchant important service by a legitimate traffic in pearls, an article of ornament, in judging the value of which I became quite an expert.

It fell to my lot, for a time, to be a partner in the possession of the most famous pearl which the eastern seas ever gave up to an adventurous diver. The romance of its capture is full of poetic and dramatic incident; and, as it is one of the most de-

lightful and profitable of my experiences of the eastern seas, I propose to give you, in one brief chapter, the whole of its singular and touching history.

CHAPTER XI.

IDYLLIC BUT TRUE.

In the land of perpetual summer the golden light of evening is trembling on the high hills. A group of sun-kissed girls are finishing their daily bath. They might be a school of mermaids, so full of graceful ease and fearlessness is their every motion in the amber-flecked sea.

As the rest of the tawny beauties go laughing towards the village, the fairest of them, the pearl of Sooloobongen, disappears, by the way, in a grove of bending palms.

With a subdued rapture she sinks into the arms of a youth, who tremblingly awaits

her. It were death to both if Muda Burundeen had knowledge of their loves. The girl is Sorra, his youngest daughter; the boy is Moarra, his favourite slave.

"Now, let me die," says Moarra, "if so we could be sure to meet again in that other land beyond."

"Live for Sorra," replies the girl, "for without thee she dies always."

"It were best thou hadst not looked upon me," is the answer made in slow measured words, soft as Italian, and with a strange music in the native rhythm of them.

"Thou art beautiful," she says.

"I am a slave," he replies.

"By the fortune of war," she answers; "but the true greatness of thine own nature shall redeem thee."

"There is such hope in thy sweet voice that I lay my soul upon its music, and am wafted into a strange blissfulness," he rejoins; and it would have surprised you, could you have heard in his tender words how melodious, how soft, and capable of

poetry is the Malayan language, which he spoke.*

"Listen! It is Muruda's watchful signal. Farewell, Moarra, my heart is thine; and when the hour arrives, if come it should, we can die, dear love, together."

There is a gentle rustle among the great shadowy leaves. She is gone. The moon has taken up the faded glories of the sun. A gentle breeze comes from the phosphorescent sea. The afternoon hush of the woods is changed to an unwonted bustle. All the world that was so still is alive. The drowsy perfume of ten thousand blossoms is in the air. A million stars are in the sky.

* Mr. Burbidge, in *The Gardens of the Sun*, says: "The Bornean Malays possess a vast amount of traditional lore, and many of their songs refer to the history of their country and the beauty of their women. . . . . Many of the fables of the Malays are in blank verse, and are rich in imagery." In narrating this episode of my experiences of Sooloo and Brunei, I have endeavoured, in the dialogue of the actors, to annex something of the spirit of such of the poetic examples of the literature of the Malays as I have come across in the libraries of Singapore, Hong Kong, Labuan, and London.

"O great Master of all that lives in earth, in sea, and skies!" exclaims the slave, "what a world of bliss is here close about me, and yet it might as well be far away as yonder moon!"

* * * *

A great chief of Brunei had a favourite slave, a youth possessing a splendid endowment of masculine strength and beauty. He was the offspring of an enforced union between a Sooloo warrior and a Spanish woman captured in a piratical attack apon a foreign ship near the coast.

Muda Burundeen was the chief; Moarra the boy. The chief had a lovely daughter, Sorra, a girl with a peculiarly pensive expression, gentle beyond all her sisters, beautiful beyond description.

Moarra loved the chief's daughter. She returned his passion. A slave to look with eyes of love upon his master's daughter was bold to recklessness. The young girl risked, if not life itself, much that life is worth living for in Soolooland, where this Brunei chief

had made his home. Muda Burundeen was a man ahead of his fellows, and was high in favour at the court. He had travelled and learnt some of the arts of civilisation, more particularly those of gambling and trade. He had made many long and venturesome expeditions round about the coast. At the period of this present history he had during several years sailed his prahu between Sooloo and Manilla on regular trading voyages.

Mr. Spencer St. John, in his interesting work "Life in the Forests of the Far East," relates how during the course of his voyages this famous chief made the acquaintance of an English merchant, who had on various occasions trusted him with goods, and in other respects treated him very liberally. It is no uncommon thing for English merchants to give their confidence to native traders in this way, and as a rule they find no reason to regret their generosity. Now Muda Burundeen in an evil moment fell under the fascinating influence of gambling. All the money he made by commerce he lost at the

gaming tables of the capital of Sooloo. In this way he squandered all his property. He was obliged to sell his houses and his slaves, and "at last," said Mr. St. John, "lost so large a sum that he was obliged to place his wife and children in pawn as security. The only property he had preserved was his favourite slave-boy."

Moarra was an expert diver, and on several occasions had enhanced the fortunes of the chief by his dexterity and courage at the pearl banks. On these excursions the chief had often talked to the boy about a wonderful pearl that had been fished up near one of the deepest banks and accidentally dropped overboard. This was one of the traditions of the coast. The natives were in the habit of peering over the sides of their canoes and boats down into the transparent water, in the hope of detecting the lost pearl; for occasionally the great oyster-shells might be seen wide open at the bottom of the sea.

* * * *

Forlorn and sad, ruined, and with little

prospect of retrieving his fortunes, the chief went with his boy to the oyster-banks of Sooloo, principally for the purpose of collecting seed-pearls. They fished during many weeks, and with fair success, filling their bamboo receptacles by day, while at night the chief would recount his adventures to Moarra. He related startling incidents of gambling, trading, and fighting, and often referred to the wonderful pearl which the ancient fisher having brought up from the deep had accidentally dropped back again without recovery.

"It is hereabout," the chief would say, "and there is only one diver in Sooloo that dare go down so deep as the spot where it is lying."

"Who is he, master?" the boy would ask.

"Thou art he!" Muda Burundeen would say, and the boy would smile with a tender thought concerning the possible result of such good fortune as the capture of the great pearl.

On the occasion of this latter expedition,

Moarra ventured to question the chief as to the material value and power of this traditional gem.

"It would make Muda Burundeen happy once more; it would make his name smell sweet to the great English merchant; it would give him back his slaves; it would restore to him his family, his wife——

"And the beautiful Sorra?" said the boy softly, and as if he chaunted the question, his great black eyes seeming to look far away into the distance as he spoke.

"And Sorra also," said the chief.

"Is the brave chief's daughter a slave?" asked the boy, wistfully.

"Dog!" exclaimed the chief, "is Muda Burundeen a slave?"

"Only to Allah, who has sultans and princes for his slaves," answered Moarra, looking his master fearlessly in the face.

"I have cherished thee beyond the knowledge of thyself," said the chief. "One day I may take thy head instead of thy answer."

"Moarra is not afraid to die. Many a time he thinks it would be better."

"Why does the slave think so?"

"Because he is a slave."

"Ingratitude is a sin against Allah. Art thou not well fed? Hast thou not fine raiment and rings for the festivals? Art thou not the favourite of thy chief and his trusted servant?"

"All that is good," answered the boy; "but he who breathes the free air, and roams the forest, his own master, the lowliest of the Sultan's subjects, is he not happier than Moarra? He loves, he marries, he builds his house, he sows his rice, he hunts, he is free."

"Who taught thee this strange wisdom of speech? Does it come of our expeditions to the merchant at Manilla?"

"It is thy own noble nature, great chief, that permits thee to hear thy slave talk as if he were thine equal; and who, shouldst thou sell him his freedom to-day, would give thee his life to-morrow, if thou shouldst ask it of him."

"Thou art a brave boy; it is the blood of the white chiefs that speaks within thee; for thou art not as the others."

"Why did not the great chief sell Moarra, when he parted with the rest of his slaves?"

"Muda Burundeen does not hand over his favourite to the stranger. What else does thy lack of freedom prompt thee to ask of thy master? If slavery hath so little check on thy speech, what might thy liberty be expected to add to thy desires, the right to make thy master a slave? Say on, boy."

"The right," said Moarra, standing erect before his master, "to be thy friend."

"Thou art brave, thou art well-made, and of a constant nature, not a slave born of slaves, and, if Muda Burundeen were powerful and rich as once he was, he might promote thee as thy daring ambition would have it. But to be Burundeen's friend or slave is to be bound to fallen fortunes, if not to dishonour."

"May thy trusted slave still say on?"

"It kills the night to hear thee talk."

"Men call thee the wise chief, the traveller, the learned."

"Men did call me so," said the chief.

"And do so still, and shall again twenty-fold; and honest likewise."

"That English merchant, he who trusted me that I might squander his goods at games of chance: shall he join this chorus of admiration?"

"Thou hast said it. Listen, master! One day upon the water where the ancient fisherman dropped the pearl-laden shell, the sea was still as if it listened for the distant breeze, and so clear that the shimmer of the shells flashed on the sands beneath. As I looked and thought of all that my soul cherishes which that pearl of old could buy, behold there was an open shell, and I saw the great gem lying there in the very heart of it!"

The chief leaped to his feet.

"I saw the pearl," went on Moarra.

"Where is it, boy?" exclaimed the chief; "speak low, speak low!"

"Yonder, fifteen fathoms deep," he said. "What wouldst thou have given me, master, had I brought it thee: my freedom?"

"Dog! Thou torturest me!" said the chief.

"I am no dog, though I am thy slave," went on the boy. "I thought of thee and thy wants, and dived within what seemed reaching distance, and then felt death stealing upon me, and came to the surface again for breath. Clinging to the boat, I watched—my heart, as it were, standing still—and as I watched the great shell closed. I marked it in my memory, and dived again to see it, and to note its significant lines and shape. To-morrow I will lay that pearl in thine hand, or let death give my soul the freedom thou deniest me."

"Thou hast had a dream, and the fiends have cheated thee!"

"I have had no dream. When has Moarra spoken that which is false?"

"Never; thou shalt be free!"

"I kiss thy hand."

"Ask what thou wilt; with that pearl, and thine own past service and devotion to back thee, it is thine."

"Two gifts I shall ask of thee."

"Name them."

"The first is freedom."

"Aready thou art answered."

"The second I will demand of thee to-morrow."

"If it be within the bounds of honour it is thine."

* * * * *

The kingfisher darted through the giant grasses by the river as the canoe glided with the stream towards the sea at the first light of morning. Flying day-bats rushed by them; foxes with wings emulated the movements of owl and hornbill. A mighty forest fringed the river, and the canoeists hugged the shore. Butterflies of gold, and black, and blue, and green, in waving clusters of dazzling light, mocked the radiance of the pearl the fishers

went to seek. Flowers that nursed the sunshine in their yellow bosoms perfumed the air. "Wild men of the woods" looked down upon the boat as it swam beneath overhanging trees.

Neither the chief nor the boy spoke. Great hopes and doubts possessed them both. By-and-by they shot out to sea. When they rested for awhile Moarra was the first to break the silence.

"All the omens I have counted by the way are good," he said.

"No bad birds croaked or sang," answered the chief.

"When a man is free," said the youth, "the world is his dwelling-place where to choose. Is it not so, master?"

"The world is great, far beyoud Manilla," was the cautious reply.

"Is there a taint in slavery? Does it cling to a man unseen, and unfit him for high places?"

"A slave is a slave," said the chief.

"But if he date back his blood to the

free and the noble; if the great Father hath set his mark on him for equality with the free?"

"I know none such," said the chief.

"Slaves can feel; they have arms, hands, eyes; and they are often brave unto death. I have seen such men among thine own. By what right are they bond men and women, with their hearts and souls things of traffic, of sale and barter, as their bodies are?"

"They are as they are," answered the chief.

"Thou saids't, 'I give thee thy liberty;' am I free now in thy estimation?"

"Thou art."

"Not in mine own; I am not free until I pay thee for it with that same pearl, or until I rob thee of myself beneath the waters. But I would have thee say now, and have thee vow by Bu'at Timantangis thou holdest so dear when sailing from sweet Sooloo, that Moarra is free."

"By mine honour, boy, and by our Hill

of Tears, I swear thou art no longer slave to Muda Burundeen!"

The chief raised his right arm as he spoke, and the boy bent his head for a moment, to look up with bright but fearful eyes at his master.

"Thou art good as thou art great," he said, "and, now that I am free, I fear to use my right to speak with the licence of liberty."

"Have no fear; thou art as poor as thy master, for thou wast his last possession."

"Nay, great chief, dost thou forget the flower of Sooloo, the gentle Sorra?"

"I forget nothing," said the chief, "but the slave may remember what the freeman must forget. My favourite servant yesterday, thou art merely a subject of the Sultan to-day. We permit liberties in our slaves which we wipe out in blood, the offender being equal in the sight of the Sultan's laws and a chieftain's honour. Have a care, Moarra, how thou usest thy liberty."

"Great chief, instruct me. My heart is full of strange longings. My soul seems to be soaring yonder like a bird about the heights of Timantangis. The voices of my great kinsmen whose blood mingles with my own whisper in my ear, "Thy love hath ennobled thee; fear not!"

The chief wondered at the youth, and half feared him, as a sudden ecstacy seemed to lighten up his face.

"What wouldst thou?"

As the chief spoke the boy seized his arm, and by the inclination of his own head motioned him to look over the side of the boat. They had drifted as they had talked, and were beyond the extreme borders of the pearl-bank. The chief bent his face down to the water. There, lying almost under the boat, but at a depth far beyond the distance of a Sooloo diver, he saw an opened shell, and, distinctly visible within it, an enormous pearl. He looked up at the boy, who stood ready to dive.

"Say, am I a free man?" asked the youth, in a low voice.

"Thou art."

"That pearl ——"

"Is beyond thy reach," said the chief.

"It would restore ——"

"My freedom," said the chief, again interrupting him, "for he who cannot pay is bondman to his debtor."

"I will bring thee that pearl for another which is already thine, and which given to me I will treasure and cherish beyond the riches of all the seas."

"What pearl?" the chief asked.

"Thy daughter, Sorra!" said the youth, "Pearl for pearl!"

"Ingrate! darest thou insult thy benefactor?"

"If to love his daughter beyond his life, if to lay that life at the father's feet at his command, for that he is her father; if this be insult, then, great chief, I dare insult thee!"

The boy stood upright in the frail boat, a picture of lissome beauty, his face quivering with emotion, his hands half poised for a header.

"I forgive thee!" exclaimed the chief, looking with admiration at the lithe figure and the radiant face. "Sorra shall be thy wife."

As the last word fell from the chief's lips Moarra dived from the boat, shooting downward with the force of a bolt from a gun. The boat swayed from side to side, but in a moment was steadied by the chief, who flung himself into an attitude of observation, his face upon the water, his hand upon the paddle. Down, down, into the blue sea went the dark figure; down, down, as if it would never stop. A great fish sailed out of the unseen circle round about, and passed over the point of vision. Muda Burundeen sought his knife, and for a moment was on the point of diving to the boy's rescue; but the monster was not a shark, and the interrupted line of light again showed the diver coming upwards, up, up, but with an unsteady mo-

tion, wavering and uncertain. The chief had to move the boat to keep it even with the boy, and then, suddenly slipping off part of his scanty dress, he dropped silently into the water, to re-appear almost the next moment, supporting the diver, whom he lifted into the canoe.

It was an hour or more before Moarra came to his senses. He had brought up the shell, which had closed upon his hand. When the boy had sufficiently recovered, they forced open the great shell, and found therein a pearl of extraordinary size and shape, a treasure not surpassed in all the history and tradition of the Sooloo seas. They pulled back to the river, and as they entered it the golden sunlight lay serene upon the distant hills. Moarra was silent. He could hear the voices of the women, for it was the time when they took their evening bath; and the words of Sorra seemed to come back to him as in a strain of music, "We can die, dear love, together."

* * * * *

There is a city in the Sooloo sea; its streets are waterways, as are those of Venice. One happy day, a few months after Moarra and the chief had gone homewards in silent delight over their prize, a wedding procession of gaily-decked boats halts at the Sultan's palace; for his highness has deigned to give his personal countenance to the union of Sorra and Moarra.

The English merchant, Jeffrey Waller, has paid Muda Burundeen, for the pearl, enough dollars to cover his debt, redeem the chief's slaves, release his family, and re-establish his position; and he has come from Manilla at the express invitation of the Sultan, who has given him a considerable profit on his original purchase for the priceless gem.*

* Mr. Spencer St. John (whose charming work, first, I believe, recorded the simple and unadorned incident of the capture of the pearl and its sale to an English merchant by his native creditor) says the purchaser sent the pearl to China. "What became of it afterwards I could never distinctly trace, but I learned that a pearl in Bengal, which was there called the 'Mermaid,' originally came from China, and, as the one found in Sooloo was said to be shaped like a woman's bust, it is perhaps the same." As

The English merchant had known Moarra, and, interested in his fate, had induced the Sultan to grant to the youth full recognition of his noble Spanish blood. The chief had always been a favourite at court; and so the Sultan, delighted with his pearl, anxious to please the merchant, willing to

Mr. St. John knew nothing of the slave-boy's love-story, his conversations with the chief, his bargain "pearl for pearl," and the happy *denouement* thereof, it is not surprising that he is unacquainted with the subsequent history of this treasure of the Sooloo seas. It is not likely that he should know it. The secret is mine. There is no longer any reason why the mystery should not now be cleared up. Sometime since I narrated the story thus far in a London journal, simply as an episode of my life in the East, with a promise that I would at a future day give the sequel to the readers of that journal. It was not my intention at that time to have given the whole of my personal history to the public. I have, therefore, preferred, while fitting this romantic incident into the period of my life to which it belongs, to reserve for my autobiography the record of the sequel thereof. I may, however, for the information of Mr. St. John's readers and my own, state that it is the interval prior to the pearl's appearance in China that belongs to my own personal adventures. It will in nowise detract from my narrative to admit that the pearl which ransomed Sorra from slavery to love and liberty *is* now in the Imperial regalia of China.

bestow distinction upon Burundeen, has all his guns fired on this happy day, and gives a feast in honour of the bride and bridegroom.

In the centre of the procession of boats, and under a canopy of radiant cloth of gold, are seated Sorra and Moarra; he attired in the gay fashion of Sooloo, his jacket and breeches covered with rich embroidery, a bright kerchief round his head; she in loose trousers of yellow silk, with coquettish sarong worn as a sash, embroidered with butterflies. The upper garment that hangs from her shoulders, not unlike the hussar jacket of our light cavalry, is not permitted to hide her lovely bust. Her graceful figure is not, however, seen under the fashion of the court as on that other day when, for a few short moments, she halted on her way from the bath beneath the bending palms. It may be that her charms are enhanced by the aid of braided sarong and ornaments of gold. You might think so if you could see the delighted glances which Moarra casts upon her, and

hear the chorus of praise that welcomes her to the Imperial feast. As the Sultan himself receives her in the doorway, the water below them repeats her form and figure in the flood, and surrounds it with great splashes of colour.

And now the brass guns of the sultanate are fired all at once, shaking the wooden city of the sea, to signify that the wedding feast has begun; and everybody is happy, more particularly the Sultan, possessed of the finest pearl known to the kingdoms of the East; and Moarra endowed with the pearl of Sooloo beauty, whose loving smile is more to him than all the treasures of China and Peru.

CHAPTER XII.

IN WHICH "THE MERMAID" IS THE CHIEF FACTOR OF CERTAIN CURIOUS PLOTS AND COUNTER-PLOTS.

Although the traditions of the East show that from the earliest times precious gems have been regarded as conferring power and influence upon their possessors, history proves that they have always been associated with ill-luck and misfortune.

Emperors, kings, and princes have waded in blood for their possession; and suffered dethronement, persecution, torture, and martyrdom to keep them.

The only exceptions to this rule of ill-luck which I have come upon, in a long course

of reading and experience, are in a few instances where the original finders, being slaves and bondsmen, have obtained their freedom in return for their discoveries. The one exception of an Eastern potentate being induced to part with a great decorative treasure because it brought him ill-fortune is I suspect that which I am about to relate.

"The Mermaid's" (for such is the name now given to the Sooloo pearl) first influence was, as we have seen, a good one; but it no sooner became enshrined in the palace of the Sultan Kimona than misfortune fell upon the Court even to the endangering of His Majesty's own life.

Within a month of the marriage of Sorra and Moarra the king's favourite wife died. Two months later the Spaniards wrested from him a part of his territory. Before the Oriental nature had adapted itself to this change of fortune the king's mother fell dead while the pearl was being exhibited in state to an illustrious guest; and it was during

the latter part of my stay at Meimbong that the Sultan had a very direct and startling revelation and warning of the baleful influence of "the Mermaid."

It was a ghost. The Sultan saw it in the night, and heard its voice. If the Committee of Physical Research had been represented at Meimbong they might have encountered one of those substantial ghosts which have appeared not only in England but in all parts of the known world. At the same time they might have obtained curious evidence of supernatural manifestations from Mr. Jeffrey Waller, the Manilla merchant, who was a singular compound of the sharp business man, the man of taste, and the man of learning. I did not at first even suspect his many remarkable qualities; but I lived to know him as one of the most interesting persons I have met during a career of travel and adventure in many lands.

The Sultan's apartment, though it communicated with several others, was a somewhat solitary room overlooking his private

garden. Within his chamber was a staircase that led to his treasure-store, through which there was also a secret way to the throne-room, where His Majesty received illustrious visitors on great occasions. The pearl and other precious things were kept under lock and key, cabinets within cabinets, the Sultan holding the master key. Neither Chubb nor Griffiths nor any other safe-maker had penetrated the courts of the eastern seas; but the Sultan Kimona had some curious protective artifices, which might have offered mechanical suggestions even to the lock-makers of Yale and Birmingham. Now the person third in succession to the sultanate was the king's nephew, Prince Tawe, who was about as complete a scoundrel as could well be imagined. He had been allowed to travel abroad for several years in China and India. The vices of barbarism and civilisation were combined in his character, and he had supplemented the cunning of the former with the audacity of the latter. Having

(as was afterwards suspected) failed in an attempt to poison his way to the throne, by sweeping from his path the three living obstacles to his succession, he resolved to plunder the royal treasury and spend the remainder of his days in riot and luxury beyond the reach of law or vengeance.

The Sultan had a weakness for gems. His treasury contained several diamonds of great value, two of them roughly set as centre-pieces of ornamental jewels. Neither Mawe nor Tavernier, nor Emmanuel, nor Streeter, nor the other authorities on precious stones had ever penetrated the secrecy of the Sooloo collection. Few travellers had ever seen it, and the Sultan confided to me that he went in constant fear of thieves, and also in dread of Spanish annexation. He regretted that he had added "the Mermaid" to his collection. He confessed to me his belief that the spirits were angry at its removal from the deep sea. "Seven times of late," he said, "have I seen a shadowy

form pass to and fro, a messenger surely of reproach and death."

Pressing His Majesty on the subject, I found him an implicit believer in ghosts, and I also learnt that this one, which he began to imagine haunted the pearl, was attended by a strange luminosity. He described it as giving forth in the darkness a weird, uncertain light, not the flashing radiance of the flies in the mangrove swamps, but a softened glimmer that might belong to the spirit-world.

"Has it ever addressed your Majesty?" I asked.

"Nay, not so," he answered, "but once as it passed the portal I heard a voice say, 'Give my ocean-treasure of the ancient fisherman unto thy servant Tawe, that he may restore it to the mermaids who mourn for it, and that peace and health may once more smile upon thy house, and save thy soul also from the death.'"

"Is it not strange that Tawe, rather than Moarra, who brought it to the light,

should be selected for the duty of restoring the pearl?" I asked.

"He is favoured of the spirits; they appeared at his birth; and he is learned in strange tongues," said the King.

It serves no purpose, but to create undue excitement in the mind of the reader, that I should dwell upon the details of my discovery that Prince Tawe was the ghost, and that he had sought the aid of spiritualism, as practised in all ages and in all climes, to promote his designs upon the Sooloo treasury. Phosphorescent aids in this respect were even known and practised, according to ancient chronicles, by certain Saxon monks of Crowland to terrify the Norman invader. The modern idea of luminous paint is indeed founded in necromantic practices that are as old as superstition. I learnt Malay, which is the language of the Sooloo court, in six months, and this and the special privileges granted to me by the Sultan enabled me to ferret out the plot of that learned and accomplished prig the Prince Tawe.

Now the Manilla merchant was a wise and discreet man. It happened that he was in port at this period of my fortunes; and he counselled me how to turn this design of Tawe to account. Jeffry Waller hated Tawe for reasons which he never explained.

"Tawe," he said, "will obtain the pearl. There are ghosts *and* ghosts, spirits and spirits. Heaven knows that I should be the last one to question the truth of the manifestations it permits on the part of loved ones who have left this world to the loved ones that remain! You have distinguished between the real and the spurious; but the Sultan will not; neither would any circumstance, short of absolute proof, induce him to suspect the loyalty and truth of Prince Tawe. The ghostly visitants, which are probably no other than Tawe in disguise, cover, as you suspect, a design to rob the treasury, not only of the pearl but possibly of other valuables. I know what is in your mind. The plan is a worthy one, no doubt. You contemplate a counter-plot

to thwart Tawe and expose him before the Sultan and his court; in short, to bring a scoundrel to justice, and thus show your gratitude to the Sultan for his hospitality."

"You have indeed," I answered, "covered the chief points of my present design and intentions. My scheme is to outwit the ghost while in the act of robbery and strip him of his disguise. Should he fail to open the treasure-chests by pick-locks and rely on strategy for getting possession of the pearl that he may pretend to restore it to the sea, I am not quite sure how I may act."

"Will you be advised by me?"

"You have a right to command me, since I almost owe the preservation of my life to you, and am certainly indebted to you for the comfort of my present quarters."

"Do not overrate the services I have rendered you; but trust to my knowledge of these regions, and to my long experience of barbarous courts, to advise you in the present emergency, so that a mutual profit may accrue to both of us, and you may

extend your travels to other countries with a purse re-equipped and increased wisdom."

I noticed that the merchant spoke English with a rhythmical flow of sentences and a musical cadence that is peculiar, it seems to me, to my countrymen who have grown accustomed to the various languages of Oriental and savage tribes. This view of Mr. Waller's euphonious style has occurred to me since I have met and conversed with Mr. H. M. Stanley, the discoverer of the discoverer himself, the young explorer who found the old man of many adventures in the heart of Africa. I have heard Mr. Stanley tell the story of his march to Ujiji, and in imagination stood by his side when the marvellous romance of the moment was discounted by the interrogation of commonplace life, "Dr. Livingstone, I presume?" And I have found myself wondering at the poetry of a story so informally and prosaically commenced. Sitting, as it were, at Stanley's feet and listening to his narrative has realised to me more completely than all my reading

how Homer might have related to his wondering hearers the great story of Ulysses. It is well for me that my name and credit were pledged to this present narrative before I heard Stanley recount his experiences, otherwise I might not have ventured upon this present undertaking. When I say it is well for me, I mean to this extent, that I should not, I am sure, go to my grave happily without writing down these confessions of my life. One of the chief delights of composition, more particularly in the narration of adventures, lies in relieving the mind and the memory of their accumulated load of reminiscences. It has been said, in verification of this, that even where there is no intention or expectation of benefiting others, the delight may be none the less, though the prospect or hope of such a result will intensify it. Says the philosopher, "Much that is commonly referred to pedantry may be explained in a similar manner as originating rather in the indescribable charm which the understanding experiences in recalling

and applying its acquisitions than in any motive of literary parade." I shelter myself behind this theorising, and hope for the best.

"I am in your hands," I said to the good merchant.

"And you give me your pledge of obedience, nay as implicitly as if I were your father, and you my son?"

"It is a pleasant appeal, and I am sure you will counsel well."

"Believe me, I will show you the wisdom of discretion, and the virtue of saving your own head. Let me recall to you the fable of the lion and the fox. The lion asked the sheep if he had breath of an unpleasant odour. 'Yea, verily,' said the sheep, and he snapped off his head for a fool. Then he called the wolf. 'Smelleth my breath offensively?' he asked. 'On the contrary' replied the wolf, 'it is sweet beyond compare.' The lion tore the wolf to pieces for a flatterer, and called upon the fox. 'I have caught a cold' said the fox,

'and at present have lost my sense of smell.' And so, Mr. Durand, let us adjourn to my cabin, where I will show you that I have not been unmindful of the vicissitudes that mark the history of the precious gems of Eastern treasuries."

The cabin of *The Pioneer* was a picture of luxury. Lined with decorated sandal-wood, its floor was of polished teak, partially covered with Persian rugs. On the port side were two chests of drawers with antique brass handles; on the other a broad soft couch covered with white linen. The port-holes were broad and wide. A gentle breeze came in without ruffling in its course the placidity of a perfectly blue and clear sea.

A native attendant served us with fruit, light wines, and Manilla cigars.

Presently, when we were quite alone, the merchant turned up the sleeve of his light jacket and disclosed, just above his elbow, a gold armlet.

"I have your pledge of obedience; I give you proof of my trust in you, and illus-

trate to you the necessity of discretion in these Gardens of the Sun, these paradises where the asp lurks beneath the flower and the boa lies coiled amidst the foliage of the nipa and the gutta."

He pressed the fore-finger of his right hand upon the armlet, whereupon a portion of it gave way sufficiently to discover a miniature key. This removed, the armlet closed as before.

The two first drawers of the cabinet contained six revolvers and ample ammunition. Two curious recesses had to be opened, by means of secret springs, before these weapons were seen.

"And this cabinet is so thick, and so persistently lined and protected with wrought iron, that you would waste time trying to open it with an axe, and it is impervious alike to fire and water," said the merchant.

The drawers being re-locked, he opened others, remarking as he did so "There are land-rats and water-rats, as our Shakespeare says, and my captain and crew are fighting-

men when necessary, and *The Pioneer* has a wealth of resources in the way of guns you would not dream of. The Sooloo pirates and their Chinese and Borneo rivals know the weight of her metal and the force of her armoured prow."

The greatest surprise however which I experienced, in regard to the contents of the merchant's cabin, was contained in a small case which my friend produced from the inner recesses of a triple series of secret drawers.

"The pearl itself!" I exclaimed, "the Mermaid!"

"No," he said, placing it in my hand, "I sold the Mermaid to the Sultan for dollars and diamonds which in English money would count up to five-and-thirty thousand pounds. At Singapore there is a certain Chinese of a strange skilfulness in imitative artificery. He is in my service, and these are examples of his work."

As he spoke he opened another drawer, the contents of which sparkled with a reful-

gence that might realise to the imagination something of the glories of the famous Peacock throne.

"Are they not superb?"

"Magnificent!" I exclaimed.

"False as they are beautiful," he responded, closing the case.

"But you don't mean to say that you——

"Are a dealer in spurious diamonds, emeralds, cats-eyes, sapphires? No, sir, but my Chinese artist is a useful man. He made the pearl, which you are holding in your hand as if it were a scorpion and might hurt you.

"You astound me!" I said, replacing the gem in a small case which he held towards me for this purpose.

"An agent of mine at Pekin informed me, five months ago, that the Prince Tawe had offered to sell him the Mermaid. The Sultan loves Tawe as the apple of his eye, his affection for him is greater than that which he permits himself to entertain for

his own son; though Tawe is a traitor and a wretch. It often happens that everybody knows the traitor except the master who cherishes him. *The Pioneer* took my Chinaman a careful sketch of the pearl, and a wooden model which I had cut from it when first it came into my possession. My object was to deceive Tawe. That he would steal the gem, or obtain it by some act of strategy—that he would obtain it nefariously, I felt certain. You know the rest, for it is from your own lips that the sequel to my surmises have fallen."

He replaced the pearl and its case in the cabinet; he put the master-key back into the golden cavity of the armlet; he motioned me to a seat, handed me a cigar, pushed the wine towards me, and sat opposite to me. He touched an ivory knob on the table, and the punkah above our heads swayed gently to and fro.

"If you were to detect this Tawe in his crime and save the pearl," he said, "the Sultan would be grateful to you for an hour.

Then he would regard you as the agent of the spirit of evil presiding over the Mermaid. The friends of Tawe would intrigue against you. Supposing he were beheaded for his treachery, which is not probable, your life would not be worth a row of beads. In the Sultan's superstitious mood he would be inclined to regard Tawe's crime as the result of fiendish action; and in this direction, my son, he might come to the conclusion that Tawe, the good and the true, was to be pitied for having been worked upon by the unseen agency of the spells with which the spirits of the deep had encompassed the pearl. It is not only Oriental monarchs who hate the bearers of ill news. Do you remember how Macbeth received the boy who told him Birnam Wood had begun to move? And can you forget the treatment which Gil Blas met with at the hands of the archbishop? You are surprised to hear a common trader quote the classics. I have translanted 'Macbeth' and two chapters of Gil Blas into Malay."

"This is indeed a day of surprises," I said, "what do you wish me to do?"

"I bring a present for the Sultan. To-morrow or the next day he shall show us his treasures. Tawe will accompany us. I recognise you as a factor in this transaction. I could dispense with your aid, but the Sultan has unconsciously made you my partner. You have supplied me with the key to the problem offered for solution by my agent at Pekin. I count you as my ally, and thus the business presents itself. When the King allows me to take up the case in which the pearl reposes I shall remove the treasure, at the same time handing the empty case to you, turning aside as I do so that you may not be embarrassed. You will place this exquisite counterfeit in the resting-place of the true one."

I rose from my seat to protest that my gratitude did not go so far as he demanded.

"Sit, my friend," he continued, "I know what you would say, but you are wrong. Listen, my son. It is ordained that Tawe shall achieve the annexation of the pearl. The words which the King heard—probably from a confederate, one of his women—are prophetic. Either Tawe will steal it, or the Sultan, to appease the spirits who have already wrought so much disaster at court, will commission the Prince to restore it to the sea at the spot where the ancient pearl-fisher saw it. Tawe is clever in many ways. Whatever he may drop into the sea, it will not be the Mermaid, which he will take to Pekin, where seventy-five thousand dollars will be his reward. He is a riotous liver, a sensualist, and he will make merry with his ill-gotten gains. Meanwhile, the Sultan will be troubled by no more ghosts or sudden deaths. Supposing the wicked Prince should take the counterfeit to Pekin, his chief resources in the way of debauchery will be cut off, his ungrateful conduct will

be properly punished. He cannot go back to Sooloo and complain. The secret will be his, and we shall enjoy his discomfiture the more, that the pearl will be ours and the profit thereof.

Once more I rose to speak.

"I know what you would say. You think Prince Tawe will conclude that I had palmed off upon the Sultan a spurious pearl at the beginning, and that he will lay snares for my life. This is my last trip to Meimbong. I am growing old. My soul longs for the rest that age seeks in the home of its youth. For five-and-twenty years I have traded in these seas, fought their pirates, withstood their fevers, risked my head, sacrificed my days. There is a religious hermit who predicts that first an outbreak of cholera, and then a typhoon, will devastate Manilla. My soul longs for rest, and I seek the security of my own land, the once familiar haunts of Bond Street and Marylebone. Nay, listen! *The Pioneer* contains all I possess. My wealth is chiefly in these cabinets. The

principal of two hundred thousand pounds lies banked at Singapore and London; duplicate bills thereof are here and there. I am on my way to England, to London. The Mermaid is my last transaction *en route*.

"Is it not a pity to sully a long career of honest trading," I said, disregarding the waving of his hand to enforce my continued silence, "by a fraud?"

"I will undertake," he answered, "to demonstrate to you by all the laws of ethics, by the Old Testament, nay by the very gospels themselves, that my proposals to you are founded in honesty and virtue. They involve the punishment of crime; the rescue from oblivion of one of the rarest gems of the sea; and the return of a shipwrecked mariner and penniless outcast to his own country, a rich man free to indulge his legitimate fancies, perhaps to wed the woman of his choice. What a story of adventure you will have to tell round the Christmas fire! How that kind uncle who sent you forth will welcome you back to his forgiving arms!

And what new music you will find in the touching melodies of those Antwerp chimes!"

I hardly know why, but I felt the tears welling up into my eyes as he invoked my utter desolation in aid of his plans for our mutual advantage. Scarsdale, my dead father, Breedon valley, and The Cedars, the calm genial eyes of Helen Dunstan, the last words of Judith Travers, my friendly intercourse with Ernstone,—all the old life and its possibilities seemed to pass in review before me, followed by the wreck of *The Phoebe*, the terrible days and nights at sea, the massacre of my shipmates, my own narrow escape, the kind-hearted king of Kututu. I hardly know at this moment why my feelings should have given way under these varied recollections; but suddenly a sense of loneliness took possession of me, and a desire to see once more the green fields of old England, and to talk with white people in European cities.

"I will give you my answer to-morrow," I said, rising to leave the cabin.

"It is well," said the merchant, "at Christmas we will hear the chimes of London."

"Perhaps," I answered.

BOOK II.

"*And Kina Balua travelled over sea and land unto the fertile countries that lie beyond the Mountains of the Moon, where the people made him a Prince to rule over them; but when he grew old he sought the home of his native land, where, being bent with weight of years, lo they knew him not any more: even the spirits of those who had loved him in his youth had ceased to haunt the once familiar house of his fathers.*"—MALAYAN ROMANCE.

CHAPTER I.

THE MERCHANT WISHES ME A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

Just as the merchant had predicted so indeed it came to pass. We heard the Christmas bells ringing out their "glad tidings of great joy" over the wonderful town.

"Listen!" said the merchant as we pulled up at Long's Hotel in Bond Street, he and I, with two attendant cabs of luggage, "there they go, the Christmas bells!"

We had arrived at the London Docks in a P. and O. steamer. It was a moonlight night. The Thames was a revelation to me. A strange weird black-looking stream, with miles of hard business-like buildings on either side of it. It might have been the

Styx after Paradise, so uninviting was the contrast between it and the rivers I had left behind me.

And the grimy looking porters and river-side men, the unpicturesque cabbies, the dingy vehicles; even the moonlight could not redeem their ugliness!

We rumbled along through back slums, over rattling roads, by blind-looking buildings with darkened windows; then we passed the flashing lights of gin-palaces, and there were crowds in all the streets. How strange it all seemed! The barbarism I had left was decked with flowers, radiant with sunshine, blessed with clear streams and lovely valleys. Civilisation! How dark and dirty and miserable it looked; and with all its bustle how inexpressibly lonely it seemed!

The merchant did not speak a word through all that long dreary ride westward. Arrived at the hotel however he seemed to experience a special pleasure in calling my attention to the music of the bells.

"I have not heard them for five-and-twenty years," he said, "the Christmas bells!"

It was Christmas eve, and close upon midnight. The cold was piercing. We had provided against it by laying in a stock of furs *en route*. The P. and O. captain had given us good advice. He had telegraphed to Long's for our rooms. They were ready when we arrived. Great fires were blazing in the grates. This was the first home-like influence I experienced, the firelight falling upon an English hearth-rug, casting a ruddy glimmer upon the counterpane of an old-fashioned bed, making dark corners and suggesting fearless slumbers.

We had a sitting-room in common, the merchant and I. Supper was laid for us. A sirloin of beef white on the top with scraped horse-radish; a pair of chickens decorated with parsley; a Yorkshire ham partly cut, a dish of mince-pies, a Stilton cheese, celery in a tall glass, and a set of

pickle-cruets. The repast was laid out upon a side-board. A waiter was assigned to the duty of handing it to us. It seemed a strange meal.

"A bottle of champagne, waiter," said the merchant.

"Yessir," said the waiter.

"Christmas beef," said the merchant, "and mince-pies for happy months."

"I am not sure that I would not have preferred some fruit and a curry," I said.

"Let us say grace!" said the merchant, "I always did so when a boy. For what we are going to receive may the Lord make us truly thankful!"

"Amen!" I said.

"The champagne, waiter" said the merchant.

"Yessir, here it is, sir."

"Long ale-glasses, waiter."

"Yessir, I will get two, sir."

"My father always drank champagne out of long ale-glasses; we only had it once a year, on Christmas eve," said the merchant.

"Indeed," I said, "you are reviving the days of your youth."

"I hope to do so somewhat," he said, "I will to-morrow show you the house where I lived as a boy; I drink your health, Mr. Horace Durand; and I wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!"

"And I wish you the same, with all my heart!" I said.

"The undercut, waiter, and I think you shall place it on the table; I will carve it."

"Yessir, if you please, sir."

"My father was quite an adept at carving; I will to-morrow show you where he is buried. Do you like it underdone?"

"Well done, thank you," I replied.

"Any pickled cabbage, waiter?"

"Yes, sir."

"Thank you. My mother used to make the best pickled cabbage I ever tasted. She bought the cabbages at Covent Garden. I remember the very shop. It was half way down that avenue, or arcade, where in spite of your eastern travels you may still, I dare

say, see the loveliest flowers and the choicest fruits the world produces. Poor, dear soul, she died six months after my father! But for that, I should have returned to London within two years after I left it. I never quite felt that either of them were dead until two hours ago, when I saw the London Docks once again. Yet, now that I hear the Christmas bells, I feel as if I had only been away a month or two, and that I shall find them at home in the parlour, at the back of the dear old shop in Oxford Street. My thoughts are in a jumble, like bells that jangle out of tune. I have seen trials and troubles innumerable, passed through dangers of shipwreck and bondage in savage lands as you have; it is five-and-twenty years since I have seen my native land until to-day; and yet I cannot say that I feel an old man."

"You are not so old as my uncle," I said, "and you look twenty years younger."

"I am sixty," he said.

"You look forty."

"And I feel five-and-thirty," he said,

"and that was about my age when I left London for a holiday and business excursion to Ceylon, Java, Borneo, Manilla, India, and the East generally. I always liked the sea, but was rarely absent from the parental roof for more than two months at a time, until I was thirty-five, as I tell you. My father and I had been companions more than anything else, ever since I was eighteen. Let us divide a happy month. My father and I were wont to do so on Christmas Eve, making my mother have a whole one, because we were so fond of her."

The merchant cut a mince-pie in two parts, and called for "two nips of brandy just to settle them," he said, "before the cheese."

An hour later we sat over the fire, smoking long pipes and drinking rum punch.

"When a man is nearing the end of his journey," said the merchant, "he wants to go home to the haunts of his youth. I am not old and I am strong, yet during the past five years I have been longing for this

day, longing to come home. My father died two years after I left London, and he appeared to me as his soul left his body."

"Appeared to you?"

"At Manilla. I had been there three months, a guest at the house which I afterwards purchased, and which I only parted with nine months back. It was sunset; I was alone, smoking in the verandah, and thinking of home. I had that very day written a long letter to my mother, saying that I should return within a year. Suddenly I was conscious of a figure moving towards me. It halted close by me; it was a white-haired old man. 'Father!' I exclaimed. There was a smile on its pale familiar features. I stepped towards it, and the next moment it was gone, fading out gradually as a mirage at sea."

"Your thoughts are surely very gloomy," I said, "seeing that this is Christmas Eve, and you are once more safe and well in your native London."

"No, no, not gloomy, death is not a

gloomy business, my friend. It is only sad, it seems to me, when you cannot die where you were born, when you cannot live your last days among the scenes of your boyhood. I came to this very hotel often with my father, to see customers from the country. My father was considered to be the best chronometer-maker in London, and the wisest judge of gold and stones. Dealers from all parts of the world came to consult him and trade with him. Do you object to this talk about myself and my people? It is arrogant, but I would like you to know something of the man who has done business with you, and who is your partner in at least one profitable transaction."

"Mr. Waller, I feel deeply interested in all you say."

"You wonder, no doubt, why I did not return home after my father's death. It was more than nine months before I really learnt that he was dead; for his appearance on the Manilla verandah did not at that time convince me of his departure, though

it filled me with alarm. So much so, that I resolved to hasten my journey home; but my mother died exactly six months after my father, and while I was preparing to leave Manilla. I had nearly forgotten the apparition of the dear old gentleman, when almost at the same time in the afternoon, as the sun was going down, the shadow of my mother filled the same spot where my father had smiled upon me. It was the same sweet rosy face, with greyish curls about the temples, that I had last looked upon in London. As soon as it had noted my recognition of it, the shadowy form moved towards the western end of the balcony. A shadowy hand appeared. She laid her own upon it; and then I saw my father. Companions on earth since the age of seventeen, they are companion ghosts in the spirit world. That night I knew my father and mother were dead; for I dreamed it also; and a week later, when I was ready to leave Manilla, I saw them standing hand-in-hand in my garden, two old London

people looking at my flower-beds, as if they had come to stay with me. An inward voice at the same moment seemed to say, 'They are happy here; stay you yet a little while.'"

I began to think that my friend was a monomaniac. He spoke on this at once as if he read my thoughts, as he had often done before.

"These things are marvellous to you, but they are true. To me it is only strange that it is given unto so few in this world to see the spirits of the other. But we will change the subject."

"No, no, pray continue."

"For the present, yes; I see that I disturb you. Let us to our affairs. I hope you do not regret our partnership in the Mermaid. Your original scruples did you honour. But you are inexperienced in the trade of precious stones and gems. 'Diamond cut diamond' was my father's motto in regard to that branch of our business. I

owe you ten thousand pounds. My agent at Pekin sent me to Singapore drafts for that amount on Rothschilds. The Emperor of China overwhelmed him with thanks. He reckons the Mermaid the finest pearl the world has ever seen."

"You did not tell me what became of Prince Tawe."

"You never asked me; I thought you preferred to forget the subject. After the ceremony of restoring the pearl to the deep, where the ancient fisherman had first seen it, Prince Tawe obtained permission to make a visit to China, as you know. We saw the Sultan's yacht sail to put him aboard a Pacific steamer. He offered his spurious gem to my Pekin agent, who buys for the Emperor, and who happened to be at Hong Kong when Prince Tawe arrived."

"With what result?"

"My agent is the shrewdest man I have ever met. He matriculated in Persia, extended his studies in India, bought ex-

perience in Paris and Amsterdam, studied diamond-mining in the Brazils, had pearl-fisheries of his own at Ceylon, graduated as a trader at St. Petersburg, practised in Paris, Berlin, Vienna, London; and settled finally at Pekin. Some men would have denounced Tawe as a fraud, or laughed at him as a fool. But what did our Pekin friend do? Saved us all. Manilla, Sooloo, Meimbong, the Eastern Seas are not closed to us by the enmity of Prince Tawe if we chose to go back. Tawe had other pearls to sell, other gems to barter. Our agent, for in this he was yours too, ridiculed Tawe's estimate of 'the Mermaid' but thought it best to buy it, and lumped it with the rest, reckoning it at two thousand pounds, 'for,' said he, 'I think that was the wisest course.' I think so too, and you?"

"I prefer not to think about it now; I left myself in your hands; I am not a merchant nor a trader, I have no knowledge of business; you are wise and experienced; you have been kind to me, and I am con-

tent," I said, still with a feeling that the transaction was not altogether honourable.

"That is true, you are not a business man. Well, well, skill in trade does not come by nature, and dealing in precious stones is both a science and an art. Let us thank Heaven for all its mercies, my friend; good night!"

The next morning I wished to telegraph to Sir Christopher Hallam. He would communicate with Ernstone and thus spread the news of my safe return. It was Christmas-day; I must therefore wait. There were no telegraph operators in attendance, at the little town near Sir Christopher's place, on Sundays.

"Come with me," said the merchant after breakfast, "I will show you the house where I lived as a boy."

It was a cold frosty day. There were many people in the streets, some going to church, others wandering aimlessly about. Bond Street looked as strange to me as the people. Muffled in our furs we evidently

looked oddly to the people. The merchant told the driver (we were in an open carriage) to go slowly.

"Turn to the right," he said, "get into Regent Street, and then drive at a fast pace down Oxford Street."

"You have a good memory," I said.

"I shall need it. Bond Street is much altered. It seems to me that there is nothing left of it but Long's Hotel. My friend, I feel very sad."

The merchant sighed and stared about him, as one who had never seen a city before.

"All changed, all changed!" he said, "except myself, except myself!"

Arrived in Oxford Street, a gleam of satisfaction passed over his face; but only a gleam, a passing light.

"You have come too far," he said presently, "go back beyond Marylebone Lane. Pull up at the end there, and we will alight."

The carriage stopped by-and-by. We

stepped out. The merchant stood upon the pavement and looked up and down the street. Several boys touched their hats and held the carriage-door. A policeman paused and looked on. The merchant backed into the road, looking up at the handsome buildings.

"Anything wrong, sir?" asked the policeman.

"Yes, I fear so," said the merchant coming to my side and leaning upon my arm.

"Lost anything, sir?"

"Yes, I am afraid so."

"What is it, sir?"

"An old house."

The policeman looked at me.

"We are looking for a particular shop or house hereabouts."

"In the antiquarian line, or old friends?" asked the policeman, with an amiable smile.

"Old friends," said the merchant sadly.

"Did you ever hear the name of Waller?"

"Can't say as I have?"

"Not John Jeffrey Waller and Son, late Valbeck and Co.?"

"Well, no, sir."

"Famous chronometer makers and diamond merchants?"

"No, sir."

"What shop is this?"

"Drapers and furriers and the like."

"Gone," said the merchant re-entering the carriage, "gone!"

"Where next?" asked the driver.

"To Marylebone church."

Presently we stood by a flat tombstone, a dingy, neglected, record with two names upon it, "John Jeffrey Waller and Mary his wife."

After gazing upon the memorial for a few minutes, he said, "A cold, hard, cruel, resting-place!"

The organ pealed out the opening strains of a Christmas anthem. The choir followed with a burst of heavenly music.

"Ah, one needs something to sweeten

the atmosphere," he said, looking up, "come away, my son, come away, it is horrible!"

"Where next?" asked the driver.

"*To Manilla*," answered the merchant.

CHAPTER II.

COLONEL ERNSTONE ARRIVES IN LONDON, AND THE MERCHANT LEAVES IT.

I had read the carpenter's story on my way home from Singapore. The day after Christmas-day, I called upon the Editor of *The Daily Telegraph* and gave him the sequel to it.

The great London office was a very different place to that of *The Breedon Times*, where I had "fleshed my maiden pen," as young writers describe their first effort in journalism.

My surprise equalled my satisfaction when I found that the gentleman who did me the honour to receive me was acquainted

with my name. He remembered my St. Partridge sketch in *The Mayfair Magazine*. It turned out that he was not the Editor of *The Telegraph*, but one of that gentleman's responsible subordinates. "But," he said, "I happen to be the Editor of *The Mayfair Magazine*, and we have often wondered why you never followed up that very successful essay which you contributed to our first number."

Here was a revelation, after all these years! Here was a chance that had been waiting for me on that very day when I stood on the quay at Gloucester! Fate was there with two roads open to me. I wonder if I took the right one! I think I did. What would have been my lot if I had gone straight to London, and sought journalistic and literary employment then, instead of going to sea. Heaven only knows! I might have struggled on in obscurity and wretchedness, dropping manuscripts into editors' boxes, with the same kind of results as dropping them into the sea with stones tied

round them, like weights about the necks of blind puppies; who knows?

"*The Mayfair Magazine*," said my newly-made friend, "is prosperous, it is backed by a large capital, and after your short account of *The Phoebe* has appeared in *The Telegraph* I shall be glad to give you quite your own terms for a special paper in *The Mayfair* on the Bulonagan Islands, and your proposals for an expedition to Kututu. I think it will make a great sensation! And I will have it duly announced and advertised that you have promised further exclusive details and other startling revelations to *The Mayfair*, to which you made your first literary contribution."

I was overwhelmed with my sudden prospects of wealth and fame. I had an immediate inspiration to refuse my share of the Sooloo pearl transaction. Later in the day, when I had the opportunity of consulting Colonel Ernstone upon the subject, he said I was a fool to think of such a sacrifice of money. "Not fairly won!" he exclaimed,

"nonsense, my dear fellow, nonsense; if all the merchandise, in the way of precious stones and pearls, that come to London was as fairly won as that, there would not be much to complain of in regard to commercial morality." I did not agree with the colonel. But to return to my sub-editorial friend in Fleet Street; he showed me into a small scantily furnished, but warm and substantial looking room, supplied me with pens, ink, and paper.

"Not too much," he said, "just the entire story closely told; don't dwell on the wreck of *The Phoebe*, but emphasise it, because we were charged with what is called writing up the carpenter's story."

I found myself somewhat bewildered with the multitude of my facts, for it will be easily understood that I was not at that time an expert in journalistic composition. But I put the matter into a column and a half, writing it simply, more like a letter to a friend than anything else. It briefly referred to the carpenter's story, endorsing

his account of the wreck, and giving a few details of my detention by the Bulonagans, and my ultimate escape.

I referred, in passing, to Kututu and its Irish king, intimating that at a future day I would return to the subject with especial reference to certain proposals for an expedition to Kututu and Bulonagan, with a view to an investigation of the condition of these unknown islands of the sea.

At night in response to my telegrams (in which I stated that I could not leave London at present) Colonel Ernstone arrived at Long's Hotel. It did me good to look upon his kind and honest face once more. I thought he would never leave off shaking hands with me and slapping me on the back. Not that he was one of those effusive persons who continually indulge in that kind of salutation. But he was almost beside himself with delight. It was quite unlike him to be so demonstrative.

How he talked! How we both talked! I learnt that my uncle was well; that he

spoke of me occasionally, but without any indication of forgiveness; that my mother and Miss Dunstan were intimate friends; that my step-father was a minister without a seat in the Cabinet, and as canting a humbug as ever he was; that Miss Dunstan had a town-house at Kensington and a country-seat near Scarsdale in Derbyshire; that she had lost a considerable sum of money in a colliery investment which the Right Hon. Mr. Welby, M.P. had introduced to her notice; that her name and my mother's were familiar in connection with most of the great philanthropic works of the time; that the Hallams were a very happy family; and that with my return Ernstone might now say he had nothing in life to desire.

"We will have a jolly week together in London," he said; "I know the place better than you do; I will show you the sights."

"You got my letters?" I asked.

"The last time I heard from you was nearly two years ago, dated City of Brunê."

"Is it so long since?" I said, "it seems but yesterday. You have told me nothing of Judith Travers."

"I met Father Gabriello in an odd way at Havre not very long since; I was coming from Normandy, he was going to Paris, and thence to Antwerp. He told me that the lady of the villa was a Sister of the House of Mary near that city."

"Anything else? Was she well?"

"Not very."

"Ill?"

"Yes."

"I thought so"

"Why?"

"I cannot tell."

"You have not forgotten her?"

"I never shall."

"But your feelings have changed somewhat, eh?"

"If you mean do I want to marry her, they have."

"You found a pretty Malay or a Sooloo beauty?"

"There were beautiful girls out there," I said, "and there were also the Bulonagans."

"Ah, I knew you would get over it," said the Colonel.

"If you mean that I shall ever get rid of a touch of the heart-ache when I think of Constance Gardner you do not know me. If you think that were she free to-day, from that bondage of the Church which she has embraced, I would not marry her whatever happened, you are equally wrong."

"Well, my dear Horace, all I can say is that your feelings do you honour. You have not inquired after Mr. Justice Miller."

"Hang Mr. Justice Miller!"

"Let us pray he may never have the chance of hanging us. I see by the papers he has annoyed some of the Bar by insisting upon sitting through the usual Christmas vacation. He is on the bench at the Old Bailey."

"He may be under it for all I care," I said.

"Don't be too hard on him; he always

inquires after you, and is under the impression that he did you a good turn."

"Indeed!"

"And really, Horace, I think he did."

"You did not think so at the time."

"I tried not to think so."

"You succeeded. I remember your denunciation of him."

"My heart more than my head was engaged in it," said the Colonel; "some day you may thank him."

"Never."

"I think you will; but don't let us have a row about it."

"My dear Ernstone, whatever you may say to me, that can never happen. Come, it is time for dinner, and I want to introduce you to the merchant."

Arrived at Long's Hotel, I found dinner laid for me, and on the table a letter carefully sealed.

"From your friend," said the waiter; "he left for Paris an hour ago."

"Left!" I exclaimed.

"Yessir."

"For Paris?"

"And Marseilles, sir. You was to have this the moment you came in."

I opened the letter and read—

"My dear Friend,

"I inclose you draft on Rothschild's "to your order for the sum I owe you, "£10,000. I hope to catch the French mail "steamer at Marseilles for Singapore. In "my dreams, sometimes in my waking "moments, under the palms at Manilla, I "have seen those two dear people whose "names you read on that bitter, hard, slab. "The old house too, I have seen it many a "time as I sat in my verandah at sundown. "I go back to dream those dreams again. "It may be that their spirits followed me "to my eastern home. I will try and think "so. The haunts of my boyhood are blotted "out, London knows me no more. Those "good, kind, people, my father and mother, "have no association with the charnel-house "I leave behind me. They are spirits, their "bodies are dust. To them distance, space, "has no meaning. A thought will carry "them over the seas, in reality, as it carries

"us in imagination. I cannot see them "here. The old house exists no longer to "attract them hither, and, without a living "tie of blood and kindred, what shall keep "released spirits hovering over London, "except to guard those they love, to bathe "with tears the footsteps of the lonely, the "wretched, and the starving, and to mourn "over the cruelties that are committed in "the name of civilisation. Ah, my friend, "I fear our modern poet wrote in ignorance "when he said, Better fifty years of Europe "than a cycle of Cathay. God help us, we "are poor creatures. I could not stay to "wish you good-bye, lest my purpose should "change. When the driver asked me where "he should drive us next, you thought my "reply '*To Manilla*' was a cry of bitter- "ness from a bruised heart, a cynicism in "which my disappointment found expression. "Know then, my friend, that it was an in- "voluntary utterance. And do you re- "member when you laid your hand in mine "in kindly sympathy, I said, '*Yes, to* "*Manilla?*' It seemed to me that my "mother might have said, '*To Manilla!*' "and that I answered, '*Yes.*' Good-bye, my

"friend, my son let me say, for I am "much attached to you. Letters addressed, "Care of Johnston and Co., Singapore, will "find me. I have given instructions to my "lawyers here to acquaint you with my "further intentions, and I beg you to feel "assured of my esteem for your character, "and my interest in your welfare.

"Yours, to command,

"JEFFREY WALLER."

END OF VOL. II.

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